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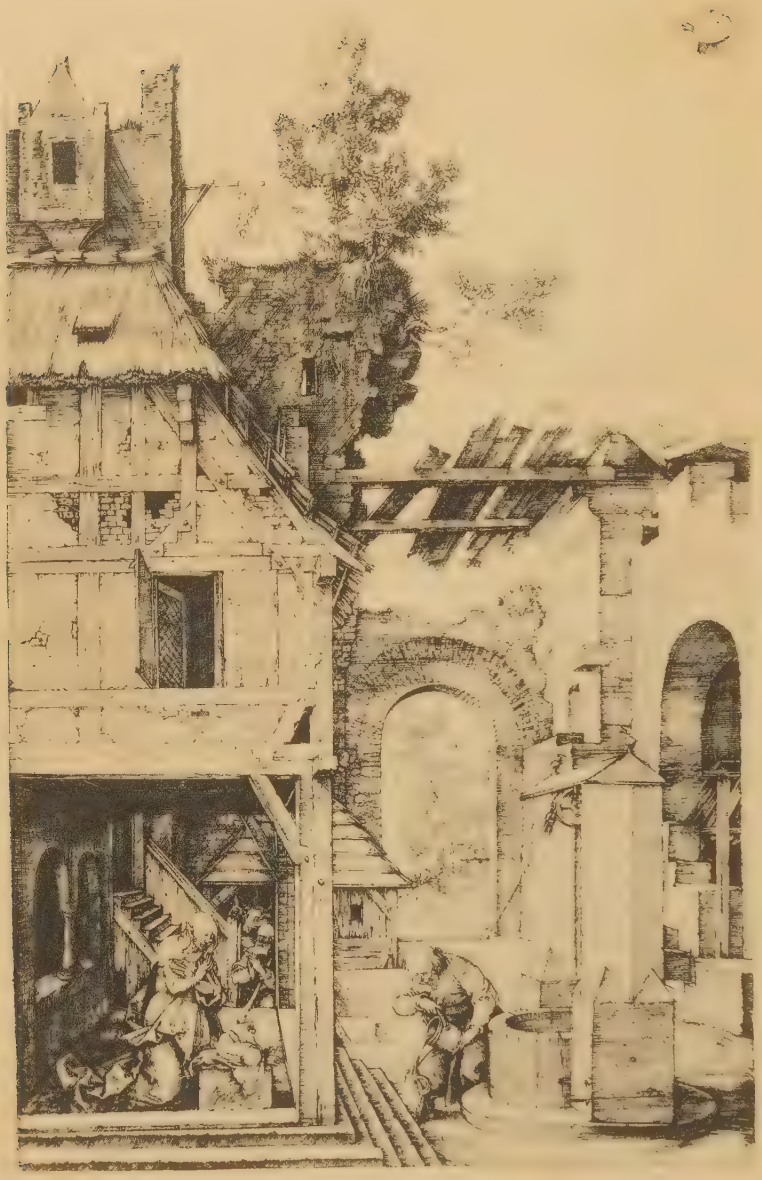
AN ANTHOLOGY OF CHRISTMAS PROSE AND VERSE



AN ANTHOLOGY OF CHRISTMAS PROSE & VERSE COLLECTED BY D. L. KELLEHER

WITH NEW STORIES AND POEMS BY HUMBERT WOLFE MARTIN ARMSTRONG T. F. POWYS, HELEN BEAUCLERK, ETC

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PART ONE

A BLESSING

GOD BLESS THE MASTER OF THIS HOUSE,
  THE MISTRESS, ALSO,
AND ALL THE LITTLE CHILDREN
  THAT ROUND THE TABLE GO:
AND ALL YOUR KIN AND KINSFOLK,
  THAT DWELL BOTH FAR AND NEAR;
I WISH YOU A MERRY CHRISTMAS,
  AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

NEW PRINCE, NEW POMPE

BEHOLD A SELY TENDER BABE,
In freesing winter nighte,
In homely manger trembling lies;
Alas, a piteous sighte!

The inns are full, no man will yelde
This little pilgrim bedd;
But forc'd He is with sely beastes
In crib to shroude His headd.

Despise not Him for lyinge there,
First what He is enquire;
An orient perle is often founde
In depth of dirty mire.

Waye not His cribb, His wodden dishe,
Nor beastes that by Him feede;
Way not His mother's poore attire,
Nor Josephe's simple weede.

This stable is a Prince's courte,
The cribb His chaire of State;
The beastes are parcell of His pompe,
The wodden dishe His plate.

The parsons in that poore attire
His royall liveries weare;
The Prince Himself is come from Heaven,
This pompe is prised there.

With joy approch, O Christian wighte!
Do homage to thy Kinge;
And highly prise His humble pompe
Which He from Heaven doth bringe.

CHRISTMAS DAY

IT IS NOW CHRISTMAS, AND NOT A CUP OF DRINKE MUST PASSE WITHOUT A Caroll, the Beasts, Fowle, and Fish, come to a generall execution, and the Corne is ground to dust for the Bakehouse, and the Pastry: Cards and Dice purge many a purse, and the Youth shew their agility in shooing of the wild Mare: now good cheere and welcome, and God be with you, and I thanke you, and against the new yeare, provide for the presents: the Lord of Mis-rule is no meane man for his time, and the ghests of the high Table must lacke no wine: the lusty bloods must looke about them like men, and piping and dauncing puts away much melancholy: stolne Venison is sweet, and a fat Coney is worth money: Pit-falles are now set for small Birdes, and a Woodcocke hangs himselfe in a gynne: a good fire heats all the house, and a full Almes-basket makes the Beggers Prayers: the Maskers and Mummers make the merry sport: but if they lose their money, their Drumme goes dead: Swearers and Swaggerers are sent away to the Ale-house, and unruly Wenches goe in danger of Judgement: Musicians now make their Instruments speake out, and a good song is worth the hearing. In summe, it is a holy time, a duty in Christians, for the remembrance of Christ, and custome among friends, for the maintenance of good fellowship: In brief, I thus conclude of it. I hold it a memory of the Heavens Love, and the worlds peace, the myrth of the honest, and the meeting of the friendly.

FAREWELL

NICHOLAS BRETON

(*Fantastickes*, 1526.)

THE STAGE-COACH

IN THE COURSE OF A DECEMBER TOUR IN YORKSHIRE, I RODE FOR A LONG distance in one of the public coaches, on the day preceding Christmas. The coach was crowded, both inside and out, with passengers, who, by their talk, seemed principally bound to the mansions of relations or friends to eat the Christmas dinner. It was loaded also with hampers of game, and baskets and boxes of delicacies; and hares hung dangling their long ears about the coachman's box,—presents from distant friends for the impending feast. I had three fine rosy-cheeked schoolboys for my fellow-passengers inside, full of the buxom health and manly spirit which I have observed in the children of this country. They were returning home for the holidays in high glee, and promising themselves a world of enjoyment. It was delightful to hear the gigantic plans of pleasure of the little rogues, and the impracticable feats they were to perform during their six weeks' emancipation from the abhorred thraldom of book, birch, and pedagogue. They were full of anticipations of the meeting with the family and household, down to the very cat and dog; and of the joy they were to give their little sisters by the presents with which their pockets were crammed; but the meeting to which they seemed to look forward with the greatest impatience was with Bantam, which I found to be a pony, and, according to their talk, possessed of more virtues than any steed since the days of Bucephalus. How he could trot! how he could run! and then such leaps as he would take—there was not a hedge in the whole country that he could not clear.

They were under the particular guardianship of the coachman, to whom, whenever an opportunity presented, they addressed a host of questions, and pronounced him one of the best fellows in the whole world.

I was roused from a fit of luxurious meditation by a shout from my little travelling companions. They had been looking out of the coach-windows for the last few miles, recognising every tree and cottage as they approached home, and now there was a general burst of joy—"There's John! and there's old Carlo! and there's Bantam!" cried the happy little rogues, clapping their hands.

At the end of a lane there was an old sober-looking servant in livery waiting for them: he was accompanied by a superannuated pointer, and by the redoubtable Bantam, a little old rat of a pony, with a shaggy mane and long rusty tail, who stood dozing quietly by the roadside, little dreaming of the bustling times that awaited him.

I was pleased to see the fondness with which the little fellows leaped about the steady old footman, and hugged the pointer, who wriggled his whole body

for joy. But Bantam was the great object of interest; all wanted to mount at once; and it was with some difficulty that John arranged that they should ride by turns, and the eldest should ride first.

Off they set at last; one on the pony, with the dog bounding and barking before him, and the others holding John's hands; both talking at once, and overpowering him by questions about home, and with school anecdotes. I looked after them with a feeling in which I do not know whether pleasure or melancholy predominated: for I was reminded of those days when, like them, I had neither known care nor sorrow, and a holiday was the summit of earthly felicity. We stopped a few moments afterwards to water the horses, and on resuming our route, a turn of the road brought us in sight of a neat country-seat. I could just distinguish the forms of a lady and two young girls in the portico, and I saw my little comrades, with Bantam, Carlo, and old John, trooping along the carriage road. I leaned out of the coach-window, in hopes of witnessing the happy meeting, but a grove of trees shut it from my sight.

In the evening we reached a village where I had determined to pass the night. As we drove into the great gateway of the inn, I saw on one side the light of a rousing kitchen fire, beaming through a window. I entered, and admired, for the hundredth time, that picture of convenience, neatness, and broad honest enjoyment, the kitchen of an English inn. It was of spacious dimensions, hung round with copper and tin vessels highly polished, and decorated here and there with a Christmas green. Hams, tongues, and flitches of bacon were suspended from the ceiling; a smoke-jack made its ceaseless clanking beside the fireplace, and a clock ticked in one corner. A well-scoured deal table extended along one side of the kitchen, with a cold round of beef, and other hearty viands upon it, over which two foaming tankards of ale seemed mounting guard. Travellers of inferior order were preparing to attack this stout repast, while others sat smoking and gossiping over their ale on two high-backed oaken seats beside the fire. Trim housemaids were hurrying backwards and forwards under the directions of a fresh, bustling landlady; but still seizing an occasional moment to exchange a flippant word, and have a rallying laugh, with the group round the fire. The scene completely realised Poor Robin's humble idea of the comforts of mid-winter.

" Now trees their leafy hats do bare,
To reverence Winter's silver hair;
A handsome hostess, merry host,

A pot of ale now and a toast,
Tobacco and a good coal fire,
Are things this season doth require."

I had not been long at the inn when a post-chaise drove up to the door. A young gentleman stepped out, and by the light of the lamps I caught a glimpse of a countenance which I thought I knew. I moved forward to get a nearer view, when his eye caught mine. I was not mistaken; it was Frank Bracebridge, a sprightly good-humoured young fellow, with whom I had once travelled on the Continent. Our meeting was extremely cordial; for the countenance of an old fellow-traveller always brings up the recollection of a thousand pleasant scenes, odd adventures, and excellent jokes. To discuss all these in a transient interview at an inn was impossible; and finding that I was not pressed for time, and was merely making a tour of observation, he insisted that I should give him a day or two at his father's country-seat, to which he was going to pass the holidays, and which lay at a few miles' distance. "It is better than eating a solitary Christmas dinner at an inn," said he; "and I can assure you of a hearty welcome in something of the old-fashion style." His reasoning was cogent; and I must confess the preparation I had seen for universal festivity and social enjoyment had made me feel a little impatient of my loneliness. I closed, therefore, at once with his invitation: the chaise drove up to the door; and in a few moments I was on my way to the family mansion of the Bracebridges.

* * * * * * * * *

I had finished my toilet, and was loitering with Frank Bracebridge in the library, when we heard a distant thwacking sound, which he informed me was a signal for the serving up of the dinner. The Squire kept up old customs in kitchen as well as hall; and the rolling-pin, struck upon the dresser by the cook, summoned the servants to carry in the meats.

Just in this nick the cook knock'd thrice,
And all the waiters in a trice
His summons did obey;
Each serving man, with dish in hand,
March'd boldly up, like our train-band,
Presented and away.

The dinner was served up in the great hall, where the Squire always held his Christmas banquet. A blazing crackling fire of logs had been heaped on to

warm the spacious apartment, and the flame went sparkling and wreathing up the wide-mouthed chimney. The great picture of the crusader and his white horse had been profusely decorated with greens for the occasion; and holly and ivy had likewise been wreathed round the helmet and weapons on the opposite wall, which I understood were the arms of the same warrior. I must own, by the bye, I had strong doubts about the authenticity of the painting and armour as having belonged to the crusader, they certainly having the stamp of more recent days; but I was told that the painting had been so considered time out of mind; and that as to the armour, it had been found in a lumber room, and elevated to its present situation by the Squire, who at once determined it to be the armour of the family hero; and as he was absolute authority on all such subjects in his own household, the matter had passed into current acceptation. A sideboard was set out just under this chivalric trophy, on which was a display of plate that might have vied (at least in variety) with Belshazzar's parade of the vessels of the temple; "flagons, cans, cups, beakers, goblets, basins, and ewers"; the gorgeous utensils of good companionship, that had gradually accumulated through many generations of jovial housekeepers. Before these stood the two Yule candles beaming like two stars of the first magnitude; other lights were distributed in branches, and the whole array glittered like a firmament of silver.

We were ushered into this banqueting scene with the sound of minstrelsy, the old harper being seated on a stool beside the fireplace, and twanging his instrument with a vast deal more power than melody. Never did Christmas board display a more goodly and gracious assemblage of countenances: those who were not handsome were, at least, happy; and happiness is a rare improver of your hard-favoured visage. I always consider an old English family as well worth studying as a collection of Holbein's portraits or Albert Dürer's prints. There is much antiquarian lore to be acquired; much knowledge of the physiognomies of former times. Perhaps it may be from having continually before their eyes those rows of old family portraits, with which the mansions of this country are stocked; certain it is, that the quaint features of antiquity are often most faithfully perpetuated in these ancient lines; and I have traced an old family nose through a whole picture gallery, legitimately handed down from generation to generation, almost from the time of the Conquest. Something of the kind was to be observed in the worthy company around me. Many of their faces had evidently originated in a Gothic age, and been merely copied by succeeding generations; and there was one little girl, in particular, of staid demeanour, with a high

Roman nose, and an antique vinegar aspect, who was a great favourite of the Squire's, being, as he said, a Bracebridge all over, and the very counterpart of one of his ancestors who figured in the court of Henry VIII.

The parson said grace, which was not a short familiar one, such as is commonly addressed to the Deity, in these unceremonious days; but a long, courtly, well-worded one of the ancient school. There was now a pause, as if something was expected; when suddenly the butler entered the hall with some degree of bustle; he was attended by a servant on each side with a large wax-light, and bore a silver dish, on which was an enormous pig's head decorated with rosemary, with a lemon in its mouth, which was placed with great formality at the head of the table. The moment this pageant made its appearance, the harper struck up a flourish; at the conclusion of which the young Oxonian, on receiving a hint from the Squire, gave, with an air of the most comic gravity, an old carol, the first verse of which was as follows :

"Caput apri defero
Reddens laudes Domino.
The boar's head in hand bring I,
With garlands gay and rosemary.
I pray you all synge merily
Qui estis in convivio."

Though prepared to witness many of these little eccentricities, from being apprised of the peculiar hobby of mine host; yet, I confess, the parade with which so odd a dish was introduced somewhat perplexed me, until I gathered from the conversation of the Squire and the parson that it was meant to represent the bringing in of the boar's head: a dish formerly served up with much ceremony, and the sound of minstrelsy and song, at great tables on Christmas day. "I like the old custom," said the Squire, "not merely because it is stately and pleasing in itself, but because it was observed at the College of Oxford, at which I was educated. When I hear the old song chanted, it brings to mind the time when I was young and gamesome—and the noble old college-hall—and my fellow students loitering about in their black gowns; many of whom, poor lads, are now in their graves!"

The parson, however, whose mind was not haunted by such associations, and who was always more taken up with the text than the sentiment, objected to the Oxonian's version of the carol: which he affirmed was different from that

sung at college. He went on, with the dry perseverance of a commentator, to give the college reading, accompanied by sundry annotations: addressing himself at first to the company at large; but finding their attention gradually diverted to other talk, and other objects, he lowered his tone as his number of auditors diminished, until he concluded his remarks, in an under voice, to a fat-headed old gentleman next him, who was silently engaged in the discussion of a huge plateful of turkey.

The table was literally loaded with good cheer, and presented an epitome of country abundance, in this season of overflowing larders. A distinguished post was allotted to "ancient sirloin," as mine host termed it; being, as he added, "the standard of old English hospitality, and a joint of goodly presence, and full of expectation." There were several dishes quaintly decorated, and which had evidently something traditionary in their embellishments; but about which, as I did not like to appear over-curious, I asked no questions.

I could not, however, but notice a pie, magnificently decorated with peacocks' feathers, in imitation of the tail of that bird, which overshadowed a considerable tract of the table. This the Squire confessed, with some little hesitation, was a pheasant-pie, though a peacock-pie was certainly the most authentical; but there had been such a mortality among the peacocks this season, that he could not prevail upon himself to have one killed.

It would be tedious, perhaps, to my wiser readers, who may not have that foolish fondness for odd and obsolete things to which I am a little given, were I to mention the other makeshifts of this worthy old humorist, by which he was endeavouring to follow up, though at humble distance, the quaint customs of antiquity. I was pleased, however, to see the respect shown to his whims by his children and relatives; who, indeed, entered readily into the full spirit of them, and seemed all well versed in their parts; having doubtless been present at many a rehearsal. I was amused, too, at the air of profound gravity with which the butler and other servants executed the duties assigned them, however eccentric. They had an old-fashioned look; having, for the most part, been brought up in the household, and grown into keeping with the antiquated mansion, and the humours of its lord; and most probably looked upon all his whimsical regulations as the established laws of honourable housekeeping.

When the cloth was removed, the butler brought in a huge silver vessel of rare and curious workmanship, which he placed before the Squire. Its appearance was hailed with acclamation; being the Wassail Bowl, so renowned in

Christmas festivity. The contents had been prepared by the Squire himself; for it was a beverage in the skilful mixture of which he particularly prided himself; alleging that it was too abstruse and complex for the comprehension of an ordinary servant. It was a potation, indeed, that might well make the heart of a toper leap within him; being composed of the richest and raciest wines, highly spiced and sweetened, with roasted apples bobbing about the surface.

The old gentleman's whole countenance beamed with a serene look of in-dwelling delight, as he stirred this mighty bowl. Having raised it to his lips, with a hearty wish of a merry Christmas to all present, he sent it brimming round the board, for every one to follow his example, according to the primitive style; pronouncing it "the ancient fountain of good feeling, where all hearts met together."

There was much laughing and rallying as the honest emblem of Christmas joviality circulated, and was kissed rather coyly by the ladies. When it reached Master Simon he raised it in both hands, and with the air of a boon companion struck up an old Wassail chanson:

The browne bowle,
The merry browne bowle,
As it goes round about-a,
Fill
Still,
Let the world say what it will,
And drink your fill all out-a.

The deep canne,
The merry deep canne,
As thou dost freely quaff-a,
Sing,
Fling,
Be as merry as a king,
And sound a lusty laugh-a.

Much of the conversation during dinner turned upon family topics, to which I was a stranger. There was, however, a great deal of rallying of Master Simon about some gay widow, with whom he was accused of having a flirta-tion. This attack was commenced by the ladies; but it was continued throughout the dinner by the fat-headed old gentleman next the parson, with the persevering

assiduity of a slow-hound; being one of those long-winded jokers, who, though rather dull at starting game, are unrivalled for their talents in hunting it down. At every pause in the general conversation, he renewed his bantering in pretty much the same terms; winking hard at me with both eyes whenever he gave Master Simon what he considered a home thrust. The latter, indeed, seemed fond of being teased on the subject, as old bachelors are apt to be; and he took occasion to inform me, in an under-tone, that the lady in question was a prodigiously fine woman, and drove her own curricle.

The dinner-time passed away in this flow of innocent hilarity; and, though the old hall may have resounded in its time with many a scene of broader rout and revel, yet I doubt whether it ever witnessed more honest and genuine enjoyment. How easy it is for one benevolent being to diffuse pleasure around him; and how truly is a kind heart a fountain of gladness, making everything in its vicinity to freshen into smiles! the joyous disposition of the worthy Squire was perfectly contagious; he was happy himself, and disposed to make all the world happy; and the little eccentricities of his humour did but season, in a manner, the sweetness of his philanthropy.

When the ladies had retired, the conversation, as usual, became still more animated; many good things were broached which had been thought of during dinner, but which would not exactly do for a lady's ear; and though I cannot positively affirm that there was much wit uttered, yet I have certainly heard many contests of rare wit produce much less laughter. Wit, after all, is a mighty tart, pungent ingredient, and much too acid for some stomachs; but honest good humour is the oil and wine of a merry meeting, and there is no jovial companionship equal to that where the jokes are rather small, and the laughter abundant. The Squire told several long stories of early college pranks and adventures, in some of which the parson had been a sharer; though in looking at the latter, it required some effort of imagination to figure such a little dark anatomy of a man into the perpetrator of a madcap gambol. Indeed, the two college chums presented pictures of what men may be made by their different lots in life. The Squire had left the university to live lustily on his paternal domains, in the vigorous enjoyment of prosperity and sunshine, and had flourished on to a hearty and florid old age; whilst the poor parson, on the contrary, had dried and withered away, among dusty tomes, in the silence and shadows of his study. Still there seemed to be a spark of almost extinguished fire, feebly glimmering in the bottom of his soul; and as the Squire hinted at a sly

story of the parson and a pretty milkmaid, whom they once met on the banks of the Isis, the old gentleman made an " alphabet of faces," which, as far as I could decipher his physiognomy, I verily believe was indicative of laughter;—indeed, I have rarely met with an old gentleman who took absolutely offence at the imputed gallantries of his youth.

I found the tide of wine and wassail fast gaining on the dry land of sober judgment. The company grew merrier and louder as their jokes grew duller. Master Simon was in as chirping a humour as a grasshopper filled with dew; his old songs grew of a warmer complexion, and he began to talk maudlin about the widow. He even gave a long song about the wooing of a widow, which he informed me he had gathered from an excellent black-letter work, entitled "Cupid's Solicitor for Love," containing store of good advice for bachelors, and which he promised to lend me. The first verse was to this effect:

He that will woo a widow must not dally,
He must make hay while the sun doth shine;
He must not stand with her, Shall I, Shall I?
But boldly say, Widow, thou must be mine.

This song inspired the fat-headed old gentleman, who made several attempts to tell a rather broad story out of Joe Miller, that was pat to the purpose; but he always stuck in the middle, everybody recollecting the latter part excepting himself. The parson, too, began to show the effects of good cheer, having gradually settled down into a doze, and his wig sitting most suspiciously on one side. Just at this juncture we were summoned to the drawing-room, and I, suspect, at the private instigation of mine host, whose joviality seemed always tempered with a proper love of decorum.

After the dinner-table was removed, the hall was given up to the younger members of the family, who, prompted to all kind of noisy mirth by the Oxonian and Master Simon, made its old walls ring with their merriment, as they played at romping games. I delight in witnessing the gambols of children, and particularly at this happy holiday-season, and could not help stealing out of the drawing-room on hearing one of their peals of laughter. I found them at the game of blind-man's buff. Master Simon, who was the leader of their revels, and seemed on all occasions to fulfil the office of that ancient potentate, the Lord of Misrule, was blinded in the midst of the hall. The little beings were as busy about him as the mock fairies about Falstaff; pinching him, plucking at the

skirts of his coat, and tickling him with straws. One fine blue-eyed girl of about thirteen, with her flaxen hair all in beautiful confusion, her frolic face in a glow, her frock half torn off her shoulders, a complete picture of a romp, was the chief tormentor; and from the slyness with which Master Simon avoided the smaller game, and hemmed this wild little nymph in corners, and obliged her to jump shrieking over chairs, I suspected the rogue of being not a whit more blinded than was convenient.

* * * * * * * * *

Whilst we were all attention to the parson's stories, our ears were suddenly assailed by a burst of heterogeneous sounds from the hall, in which was mingled something like the clang of rude minstrelsy, with the uproar of many small voices and girlish laughter. The door suddenly flew open, and a train came trooping into the room, that might almost have been mistaken for the breaking up of the court of Fairy. That indefatigable spirit, Master Simon, in the faithful discharge of his duties as Lord of Misrule, had conceived the idea of a Christmas mummery, or masking; and having called in to his assistance the Oxonian and the young officer, who were equally ripe for anything that should occasion romping and merriment, they had carried it into instant effect. The old housekeeper had been consulted; the antique clothes-presses and wardrobes rummaged and made to yield up the relics of finery that had not seen the light for several generations; the younger part of the company had been privately convened from the parlour and hall, and the whole had been bedizened out, into a burlesque imitation of an antique masque.

Master Simon led the van, as "Ancient Christmas," quaintly apparelled in a ruff, a short cloak, which had very much the aspect of one of the old housekeeper's petticoats, and a hat that might have served for a village steeple, and must indubitably have figured in the days of the Covenanters. From under this his nose curved boldly forth, flushed with a frost-bitten bloom, that seemed the very trophy of a December blast. He was accompanied by the blue-eyed romp, dished up as "Dame Mince-Pie," in the venerable magnificence of faded brocade, long stomacher, peaked hat, and high-heeled shoes. The young officer appeared as Robin Hood, in a sporting dress of Kendal green, and a foraging cap with a gold tassel. The costume, to be sure, did not bear testimony to deep research, and there was an evident eye to the picturesque, natural to a young gallant in the presence of his mistress. The fair Julia hung on his arm in a pretty rustic dress, as "Maid Marian." The rest of the train had been meta-

morphosed in various ways; the girls trussed up in the finery of the ancient belles of the Bracebridge line, and the striplings bewhiskered with burnt cork, and gravely clad in broad skirts, hanging sleeves, and full-bottomed wigs, to represent the characters of Roast Beef, Plum Pudding, and other worthies celebrated in ancient maskings. The whole was under the control of the Oxonian, in the appropriate character of Misrule; and I observed that he exercised rather a mischievous sway with his wand over the smaller personages of the pageant.

The irruption of this motley crew, with beat of drum, according to ancient custom, was the consummation of uproar and merriment. Master Simon covered himself with glory by the stateliness with which, as Ancient Christmas, he walked a minuet with the peerless, though giggling, Dame Mince-Pie. It was followed by a dance of all the characters, which, from its medley of costumes, seemed as though the old family portraits had skipped down from their frames to join in the sport. Different centuries were figuring at cross hands and right and left; the dark ages were cutting pirouettes and rigadoons; and the days of Queen Bess jigging merrily down the middle, through a line of succeeding generations.

The worthy Squire contemplated these fantastic sports, and this resurrection of his old wardrobe, with the simple relish of childish delight. He stood chuckling and rubbing his hands, and scarcely hearing a word the parson said, notwithstanding that the latter was discoursing most authentically on the ancient and stately dance at the Paon, or Peacock, from which he conceived the minuet to be derived. For my part, I was in a continual excitement, from the varied scenes of whim and innocent gaiety passing before me. It was inspiring to see wild-eyed frolic and warm-hearted hospitality breaking out from among the chills and glooms of winter, and old age throwing off his apathy, and catching once more the freshness of youthful enjoyment. I felt also an interest in the scene, from the consideration that these fleeting customs were posting fast into oblivion, and that this was, perhaps, the only family in England in which the whole of them were still punctiliously observed. There was a quaintness, too, mingled with all this revelry that gave it a peculiar zest; it was suited to the time and place; and as the old Manor House almost reeled with mirth and wassail, it seemed echoing back the joviality of long-departed years.

But enough of Christmas and its gambols; it is time for me to pause in this garrulity. Methinks I hear the questions asked by my graver readers, "To what

purpose is all this?—how is the world to be made wiser by this talk?" Alas! is there not wisdom enough extant for the instruction of the world? And if not, are there not thousands of abler pens labouring for its improvement?—It is so much pleasanter to please than to instruct—to play the companion rather than the preceptor.

What, after all, is the mite of wisdom that I could throw into the mass of knowledge? or how am I sure that my sagest deductions may be safe guides for the opinions of others? But in writing to amuse, if I fail, the only evil is my own disappointment. If, however, I can by any lucky chance, in these days of evil, rub out one wrinkle from the brow of care, or beguile the heavy heart of one moment of sorrow; if I can now and then penetrate through the gathering film of misanthropy, prompt a benevolent view of human nature, and make my reader more in good humour with his fellow beings and himself, surely, surely, I shall not then have written entirely in vain.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

CHRISTMAS LETTERS

DEAN SWIFT to STELLA

Dec. 25, 1710.

PRAY, YOUNG WOMAN, IF I WRITE SO MUCH AS THIS EVERY DAY, HOW will this paper hold a fortnight's work, and answer one of yours into the bargain? You never think of this, but let me go on like a simpleton. I wish you a merry Christmas, and many, many a one with poor Presto at some pretty place. I was at church to-day by eight, and received the sacrament, and came home by ten; then went to Court at two, it was a Collar-day, that is, when the knights of the garter wear their collars; but the queen stay'd so late at sacrament, that I came back, and dined with my neighbour Ford, because all people dine at home on this day. This is likewise a Collar-day all over England in every house, at least where there is Brawn: that's very well—I tell you a good pun; a fellow hard by pretends to cure Agues, and has set out a sign, and spells it *Egoes*; a gentleman and I observing it, he said, How does that fellow pretend to cure Agues? I said, I did not know, but I was sure it was not by a Spell. That's admirable. And so you askt the bishop about that pun of lord Stawell's brother. Bite. Have I caught you, young women? Must you pretend to ask after roguish puns, and Latin ones too? Oh but you smoakt me, and did not ask the bishop. Oh but you are a fool, and you did. I met Vedeau again at Court to-day, and I observed he had a sword on; I fancy he was broke, and has got a commission, but I never askt him.

Dec. 26. By the lord Harry I shall be undone here with Christmas boxes. The rogues at the Coffee-house have raised their tax, every one giving a crown, and I gave mine for shame, besides a great many half crowns to great mens porters.

Dec. 25, 1711. A melly Tlismas; melli Tlismas, I sd it first. I wish oo a sousand' zoll, with halt and soul. I carryed Parnel to dine at Ld Bolingb— and he behaved himself very well, & Ld Bol—is mighily pleased with him. I was at St James Chappel by 8 this morning, and Church & Sacramt were done by ten. Th Qu— has te Gout in her Hand, & did not come to Church to day; and I stayd so long in my Chambr that I misst going to Court. Did I tell y that te Qu— designs to have a drawing Room and Company every day. Nite deelogues.

ALEXANDER POPE writes a mellow kindly Christmas letter to GAY, the less fortunate poet:

December 24th 1712.

It has been my good fortune within this month past, to hear more things that have pleased me than (I think) almost in all my time beside. But nothing upon my word has been so homefelt a satisfaction as the news you tell me of yourself; and you are not in the least mistaken, when you congratulate me upon your own good success; for I have more people out of whom to be happy than any ill-natured man can boast of. I may with honesty affirm to you, that notwithstanding the many inconveniences and disadvantages they commonly talk of in the *res angusta domi*, I have never found any other, than the inability of giving people of merit the only certain proof of our value for them in doing them some real service. For after all, if we could but think a little, self-love might make us philosophers, and convince us *quantuli indiget natura.* Ourselves are easily provided for; it is nothing but the circumstantials, and the apparatus or equipage of human life, that costs so much the furnishing. Only what a luxurious man wants for horses and footmen, a good-natured man wants for his friends and the indigent.

I shall see you this winter with much greater pleasure than I could the last; and, I hope, as much of your time as your attendance on the Duchess of Monmouth will allow you to spare to any friend, will not be thought lost upon one who is as much so as any man. I must also put you in mind, though you are now secretary to this lady, that you are likewise secretary to many other ladies, and are to write sometimes for them too. He who is forced to live wholly upon those ladies' favours is indeed in as precarious a condition as any he who does what Chaucer says for sustenance; but they are very agreeable companions, like other ladies, when a man only passes a night or so with them at leisure, and away.

I am, yours etc.,

ALEXANDER POPE.

HORACE WALPOLE to THE COUNTESS OF AILESBURY

(At Christmas, 1772, Horace Walpole, the "King of the letter writers," was ill and ironical in his house at Arlington Street, W. He wrote to the Countess of Ailesbury thus:)

"Indeed, madam, I want you and Mr. Conway in town. Christmas has dispersed all my company, and left nothing but a loo-party or two. If all the fine days were not gone out of town, too, I should take the air in a morning; but I am not yet nimble enough, like Mrs Nugent, to jump out of a post-chaise into an assembly.

You have a woful taste, my lady, not to like Lord G's bon-mot; I am almost too indignant to tell you of a most amusing book in six volumes called *Histoires Philosophique et Politique du commerce des deux Indes*. It tells one everything in the world—! how to make conquests, invasions, blunders, settlements, bankruptcies, fortunes, etc.; tells you the natural and historical history of all nations; talks commerce, navigation, tea, coffee, china, mines, salt spices; of the Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, Danes, Spaniards, Arabs, Caravans, Persians, Indians; of Louis XIV, and the King of Prussia; of la Bourdonnais, Dupleix and Admiral Saunders; of rice and women that dance . . . of camels, ginghams, and muslin; of millions of millions of lires, pounds, rupees and gouries; of iron, cables and Circassian women; of law and the Mississippi; and against all governments and religions. This and everything else is in the two first volumes. I cannot conceive what is left for the four others. And all is so mixed, that you learn forty new trades, and fifty new histories, in a single chapter. There is spirit, wit and clearness—and, if there were but less avoirdupois weight in it, it would be the richest book in the world in materials—but figures to me are so many cyphers and only put me in mind of children that say, an hundred, hundred, hundred millions. However it has made me learned enough to talk about Mr. Sykes and the secret committee, which is all that anybody talks of at present.

This is all I know, and a great deal, too, considering I know nothing—and yet, were there either truth or lies, I should know them; for one hears everything in a sick room. Good night."

CHARLES LAMB to THOMAS MANNING.

December 25th, 1815.

Dear Old Friend and Absentee,—

This is Christmas Day, 1815, with us; what it may be with you I don't know; the 12th June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrative season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the season by offering up a withered Chinese Lantern instead of the Savoury grand Nrofolcian Holocaust that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your Churches, or Churches to stick your dried tea leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the Holy time I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the Wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity?

'Tis our rosy-cheeked homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of "Unto us a Child was born," faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery. I feel my bowels refreshed with the holy-tide; my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas, down with the Idols—Ching-Chong-fo—and his foolish Priesthood. Come out of Babylon, O my friend, for her time is come, and the child that is native and the proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together. And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning?

You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

CHARLES LAMB.

JOHN KEATS falls in love at Christmas.

Just before Christmas, 1818, *Tom Keats, the poet's brother, died. "The last days of poor Tom were of the most distressing nature," said the poet in a letter to their sister. But he had discovered Fanny Brawne, and he writes to his sister again, thus:*

Friday, December 25th, 1818.

. . . I think of going into Hampshire this Christmas to Mr Snook's—they say I shall be very much amused—but I don't know—I think I am too huge a mind for study—I must do it—I must wait at home and let those who wish to come to see me, I cannot always be (how do you spell it?) trapsing . . . .

Shall I give you Miss Brawne? She is about my height—with a fine style of countenance of the lengthened sort—she wants sentiment in every feature—She manages to make her hair look well—her nostrils are fine—though a little painful—her mouth is bad and good—her profile is better than her full-face which indeed is not full but pale and thin, without showing any bone. Her shape is very graceful and so are her movements—her arms are good, her hands baddish—her feet tolerable. She is not seventeen—but she is ignorant—monstrous in her behaviour, flying out in all directions—calling people such names that I was forced lately to make use of the term Minx—this I think, not from any innate vice but from a penchant she has for acting stylishly—I am, however, tired of such style, and shall decline any more of it. . . .

JOHN KEATS.

[*Not long after Christmas,* 1821, *John Keats died of tuberculosis and a broken heart.*]

BYRON to MOORE.

On Christmas day, 1820, Lord Byron wrote to Tom Moore outlining a scheme to make him prosperous:

Ravenna, Dec. 25, 1820.

My dear Tom Moore,

I have been thinking of a project for you and me, in case we both get to London again, which (if a Neapolitan war don't suscitate) may be calculated as possible for one of us about the spring of 1821. I presume that you too will be back by that time, or never; but on that you will give me some idea. The project then is for you and me to set up jointly a newspaper—nothing more nor less—weekly or so with some improvements or modifications upon the plan of the present scoundrels, who degrade that department—but a *newspaper*, which we will edit in due form, and, nevertheless, with some attention.

There must always be in it a piece of poesy from one or other of us *two*, leaving room, however, for such dilettante rhymes as may be deemed worthy of appearing in the same column; but *this* must be a *sine qua non*; and also as much prose as we can compass. We will take an *office*—names *not* announced but suspected—and, by the blessing of Providence, give the age some new lights upon policy, poesy, biography, criticism, morality, theology, and all other *ism, ality* and *ology* whatsoever.

Why, man, if we were to take to this in good earnest, your debts would be paid off in a twelvemonth, and, by dint of a little diligence and practice, I doubt not that we could distance the common-place blackguards who have so long disgraced common sense and the common reader. They have no merit but practice and impudence, both of which we may acquire; and, as for talent and culture, the devil's in't if such proofs as we have given of both can't furnish out something better than the "funeral baked meats" which have coldly set forth the breakfast table of all Great Britain for so many years. Now what think you? Let me know; and recollect that, if we take to such an enterprise, we must do so in good earnest. . . .

As for the living in London, I would make that not difficult to you (if you would allow me), until we could see whether one means or other, (the success of the plan for instance) would not make it quite easy for you, as well as your family; and, in any case, we should have some fun, composing, correcting, supposing, inspecting and supping together over our lucubrations. . . .

Yours ever affectionately, B.

P.S.— . . . Let me have an answer. I conclude, poetically, with the bellman, "A merry Christmas to you!"

LORD MACAULAY'S last Christmas.

Lord Macaulay wrote in his journal, December 23rd, 1859:

"This morning I had scarcely left my closet when down came the ceiling in large masses. I should certainly have been stunned, probably killed, if I had stayed a few minutes longer. I stayed by my fire, not exerting myself to write, but making Christmas calculations, and reading. An odd declaration by Dickens that he did not mean Leigh Hunt by Harold Skimpole. Yet he owns that he took the light externals of the character from Leigh Hunt, and surely it is by those light externals that the bulk of mankind will always recognise character. Besides, it is to be observed that the vices of Harold Skimpole are vices to which Leigh Hunt had, to say the least, some little leaning, and which the world generally imputed to him most unsparingly. That he had loose notions of meum and teum, that he had no high feeling of independence, that he had no sense of obligation, that he took money whenever he could get it, that he felt no gratitude for it, that he was just as ready to defame a person who had relieved his distress as a person who had refused him relief—these were things which, as Dickens must have known, were said, truly or falsely, about Leigh Hunt, and had made a deep impression on the public mind. Indeed, Leigh Hunt had said himself, 'I have some peculiar notions about money. They will be found to involve considerable differences of opinion with the community, particularly in a commercial country. I have not that honor of being under obligation which is thought an essential refinement in money matters.' This is Harold Skimpole all over. How then can Dickens doubt that Harold Skimpole should be supposed to be a portrait of Leigh Hunt?"

(At this point, says Trevelyan, Macaulay's journal comes to an abrupt conclusion. On Christmas Day he "talked very little and was constantly dropping asleep." On the 28th he wrote his last letter, enclosing £25 to a poor clergyman. That evening he died.)

CUSTOMS ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Mr. Coleridge writing to his "Friend," from Ratzeburg, in the north of Germany, mentions a practice on Christmas eve very similar to some on December the 6th, St. Nicholas' day. Mr. Coleridge says, "There is a Christmas custom here which pleased and interested me. The children make little presents to their parents, and to each other, and the parents to their children. For three or four months before Christmas the girls are all busy, and the boys save up their pocket money to buy these presents. What the present is to be is cautiously kept secret; and the girls have a world of contrivances to conceal it—such as working when they are out on visits, and the others are not with them—getting up in the morning before daylight &c. Then on the evening before Christmas Day, one of the parlours is lighted up by the Children, into which the parents must not go; a great yew bough is fastened on the table at a little distance from the wall, a multitude of little tapers are fixed in the bough, but not so as to burn it till they are nearly consumed, and coloured paper &c., hangs and flutters from the twigs. Under this bough the children lay out in great order the presents they mean for their parents, still concealing in their pockets what they intend for each other. Then the parents are introduced, and each presents his little gift; they then bring out the remainder one by one, from their pockets, and present them with kisses and embraces. Where I witnessed this scene there were eight or nine children, and the eldest daughter and the mother wept aloud for joy and tenderness; and the tears ran down the face of the father, and he clasped all his children so tight to his breast, it seemed as if he did it to stifle the sob that was rising within it. I was very much affected. The shadow of the bough and its appendages on the wall, and arching over on the ceiling, made a pretty picture; and then the raptures of the very little ones, when at last the twigs and their needles began to take fire and snap—O it was a delight to them!—On the next day (Christmas-Day) in the great parlour, the parents lay out on the table the presents for the Children; a scene of more sober joy succeeds; as on this day, after an old custom, the mother says privately to each of her daughters, and the father to his sons, that which he has observed most praiseworthy and that which was most faulty in their conduct. Formerly, and still in all the smaller towns and villages throughout North Germany, these presents were sent by all the parents to some one fellow, who in high buskins, a white robe, a mask, and an enormous flax wig, personates Knecht Rupert, i.e. the servant Rupert. On Christmas night he goes

round to every house, and says that Jesus Christ, his master, sent him thither. The parents and elder children receive him with great pomp and reverence, while the little ones are most terribly frightened. He then inquires for the children, and, according to their character which he hears from the parents he gives them the intended present, as if they came out of heaven from Jesus Christ. Or, if they should have been bad children, he gives the parents a rod, and, in the name of his master, recommends them to use it frequently. About seven or eight years old the children are let into the secret, and it is curious how faithfully they keep it."

EXTRACT FROM PEPYS' DIARY.

25th (Christmas Day), 1662. Up pretty early, leaving my wife not well in bed, and with my boy walked, it being a most brave cold and dry frosty morning, and had a pleasant walk to White Hall, where I intended to have received the Communion with the family, but I came a little too late. So I walked up into the house and spent my time looking over pictures, particularly the ships of King Henry the VIIIth's Voyage to Bullen; marking the great difference between their build and now. By and by down to the chappell again where Bishopp Morley preached upon the song of the Angels, "Glory to God on high, on earth peace, and good will towards men." Methought he made but a poor sermon, but long, and reprehending the mistaken jollity of the Court for the true joy that should and ought to be on these days, he particularized concerning their excess of plays and gaming, saying that he whose office it is to keep the gamesters in order and within bounds, serves but for a second rather in a duell, meaning the groom-porter. Upon which it was worth observing how far they are come from taking the reprehension of a bishopp seriously, that they all laught in the chappell when he reflected on their ill actions and courses. He did much press us to join these publique days of joy, and to hospitality. But one that stood by whispered in my ear that the Bishopp himself do not spend one groat to the poor himself. The sermon done, a good anthem followd, with vialls, and the King came down to receive the Sacrament. But I staid not, but calling my boy from my Lord's lodgings, and giving Sarah some good advice, by my Lord's order, to be sober and look after the house, I walked home again with great pleasure, and there dined by my wife's bedside with great content, having a mess of brave plum-porridge and a roasted pullet for dinner, and I sent for a mince-pie abroad, my wife not being well to make any herself yet. After dinner sat talking a good while with her, her (pain) becoming less, and then to see Sir W. Pen a little, and so to my office, practising arithmetique alone and making an end of last night's book with great content till eleven at night, and so home to supper and to bed.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S JOURNAL.

In her Journal the young Princess wrote:

Claremont,

Saturday, December 24th, 1837.

"I awoke after 7 and got up at 8. After 9 breakfasted, at a little after 10 we left Kensington with dearest Lehzen, Lady Conroy and—Dashy! and reached Claremont at a quarter to 12. Played and sang. At 2 dearest Lehzen, Victoire and I went out, and came home at 20 minutes past 8. No one was stirring about the gipsy encampment except George, which I was sorry for as I was anxious to know how our poor friends were, after this bitterly cold night. Played and sang. Received from dearest, best Lehzen as a Christmas box two lovely little Dresden China figures, two pair of lovely little chased gold buttons, a small lovely button with an angel's head which she used to wear herself, and a pretty music book ; from good Louis a beautiful piece of Persian stuff for an album; and from Victoire and Emily Gardiner a small box worked by themselves. Wrote my journal, went down to arrange mamma's table for her. At 6 we dined. Mr. Edward Byrne and Mr. Conroy stayed here. Mr. Byng is going to stay here a night or two. Very soon after dinner mamma sent for us into the gallery, where all the things were arranged on different tables. From my dear mamma I received a beautiful massive gold buckle in the shape of two serpents; a lovely little delicate gold chain with a turquoise clasp; a lovely coloured sketch of dearest Aunt Louise by Partridge copied from the picture he brought and so like her; 3 beautiful drawings by Munn, one lovely seaview by Perser and one cattle piece by Cooper (all coloured), 3 prints, a book called Finden's Tableau, Heath's Picturesque Annual, Ireland; both these are very pretty; Friendship's offering and the English Annual for 1837, The Holy Land illustrated beautifully, two handkerchiefs, a very pretty black satin apron trimmed with red velvet, and two almanacks. I am very thankful to my dear mamma for all these very pretty things. From dear Uncle Leopold a beautiful turquoise ring; from the Queen a fine piece of Indian gold tissue; and from Sir J. Conroy a print. I gave my dear Lehzen a green morocco jewel case, and the Picturesque Annual; mamma gave her a shawl, a pair of turquoise earrings, an annual, and handkerchiefe. I then took mamma to the Library where my humble table was arranged; I gave her a bracelet made of my hair, and the Keepsake, and Oriental Annual. I stayed up till eleven!"

THE WHOLE ART OF LEGERDEMAIN IN PERFECTION

By which any person, of the meanest Capacity, may perform the whole ART without a Teacher, as it is performed by the only Artists in the World.

Also, that wonderful ART of Fire-eating.

Besides several Tricks with Cards, the like before not made Publick.

The following Extracts are taken from a 17th century book on Conjuring.

THE WHOLE ART OF LEGERDEMAIN IN PERFECTION, ETC.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE OPERATOR

I. He must be of a bold and undaunted Resolution.

II. He must have strange terms and emphatical Words.

III. And lastly, he must use such gestures of body, as may take off the spectators eyes, from a strict and diligent beholding his Manner of Performance.

How to Walk on a Hot Bar, Without any danger of scalding or Burning.

Take half an ounce of Camphire, Dissolve it in two ounces of Aqauitae, add to it one Ounce of Quick-silver, one Ounce of Liquid-Storax which is the Droppings of Mirrh, and hinders the Camphire from Firing; take also two Ounces of Lapis Hematitis in Powder: Put this to the fore-mentione'd Com-position, and when you intend to walk on the bar of Hot Iron, you must anoint your feet well therewith, and you may walk over without danger. By this means you may wash your hands in boiling Lead.

How to Eat Pitch, Tar, Rosin, Sealing Wax, Brimstone, and Burning Coals of Fire.

Anoint your tongue with Liquid-Storax, and you may put a pair of tongs into your Mouth Red hot without burning yourself, and lick them till they are cold. By the help of this ointment, and by preparing your mouth thus, you may take Wood Coals out of the Fire, and eat them as you would bread, dip them into Brimstone powder, and the Fire seems more Strange, but the Sulphur puts out the coal, and shutting your Mouth close, puts out the Sulphur, and so they commonly champ the coals, and swallow them which they may do without offending the body: but if they were bound to eat nothing else, it would be a very sickly trade: And if you put a piece of Lighted Charcoal into your mouth, You may suffer a pair of bellows to be blowing in your mouth continually, and receive no hurt; but your mouth must be quickly cleans'd otherwise it will cause a Salivation.

OF CARDS OR DICE, WITH GOOD CAUTION HOW TO AVOID COUSENAGE

I would will all Gamesters to beware not only what Cards, but also what Dice they play withal; but especially with whom and where they exercise Gaming, whereby a Man may be inevitably couzened. One that is Skilful in making bum cards, may undo hundreds of wealthy Men that are given to Gaming, for if he have a Confederate present, either of the Players or Standers by, the Mischief cannot be avoided. If you play among Strangers, beware of him that seems simple or drunk, for under that Appearance the most specious Couzeners are represented, and while you think by their Simplicity and Imperfections to beguile them, and thereof perchance are perswaded by their Confederates, your very Friends, as you think, you yourself will be most of all overtaken; beware also of Betters by, and Lookers on; and namely, of them that bett on your side, for whilst they look on your Game without suspicion, they discover it by signs to your Adversaries with whom they bett, and yet are their Confederates. Secondly, you must beware of what Dice you play with at Hazard, for there are some that will run nothing else but Seven or Eleven, Six and Twelve, and some Eight and Twelve; and he that keeps the false Dice conceal'd when he finds a great deal of Money on the Table, he nimbly changes the fair Dice for the false ones, and throws at all. The false and fair Dice are of one size. And take care that, when you play at Cards, Your Adversary don't keep Cards in his Hand: Likewise take care that he don't flip the Cards while he looks in Your Face, and beware of those that talk much when they are shuffling the Cards.

To make a Card face to the right or left, and turn round 20 times.

You must be sure to have a clean pack of cards, and the Card that you would have to leap, or jump, or turn round, you must stick a needle between the folds of paper that the card is made of: Be sure you put it over the Eye of the needle, that no part of it may be seen, then desire any person to draw a Card, which you must contrive to be of the same sort, and let them put it in the Pack again; then shuffle the cards, and that Card that was drawn convey away: Now you must have a Loadstone in a Hankerchief in your Hand, so put your hand under the table, the Cards lying on the table, and as you move your hand under

the table the Card that the Needle is in will separate from the rest, and as you move your hand under the Table, the Card the Needle is in will move the same way, This being a very great secret.

How to make a card, which anyone has drawn, to stick upon the ceiling of the room.

To do this, you must first have in readiness in private, a little Soap or the like, then let any draw a card, then take this card and put him at the bottom of the pack: Then shuffle the cards as you know how, till he comes to the bottom again, then fling him upon the top, and privately put a little Soap upon the back of it, and so toss up the cards to the ceiling of the room, and the noted card will there stick with it's face downwards; then take it down pretty quickly and wipe it, least another Body do it, and so discover your Intrigue.

How to light a Candle by a Glass of Cold Water or any other liquor without the help of fire.

You must take a little piece of Phosphorus, about the bigness of a pins head, and with a piece of Tallow stick it on the edge of a drinking glass, and then take the candle lighted, and so blow it out, and apply it to the glass, and it will immediately light.

A way to know the Card that anyone thinks on.

Take 15, 21, 29 or any odd number of Cards, biding any person think on one, then take and place Them on a table, one by one in Three Parcels, then take up one of the Parcels, and desire him to tell you if the Card he thought on be there; if it be not, take up another parcel, ask if it be there, always remembering whatever parcel you are told it's in, to put them in the Middle, then lay them on the Table, as before: Then take up the Parcels one by one, ask the Question as before. This do thrice, the Middle Card in the whole heape is the Card that was thought of.

How to eat Tow, and set it on Fire in your Mouth.

Get a handful of Tow, and hold it in your left hand, then take it with your fingers and thumb of your right hand, and put it in your Mouth,

chewing of it, seem to swallow it; and when your mouth can contain no more, put the bundle of Tow that you have in your left hand, to your mouth in order to Eat More, then Disgorge what you have in your hand. All this while you must have a bit of touchwood lightted, and wrap'd in some Tow, that when you think you have Eat enough, put it in your Mouth, and blow it out all in a Fire.

How to light a Candle that was never lit before.

Take a little Phosphorus, and put it with a bit of Tallow to the Wick of the Candle, then take a Pipe stopper, or a knife, and make it hot, and hold it to the Candle, and so you may light it, which will be Admirable to the Spectators.

To set a piece of Paper Afire.

Take a little bit of Phosphorus, and lap it up in a piece of paper, and rub it between your fingers and thumbs and it will take Fire immediately. You may have the Phosphorus from me.

To name all the Cards in the pack and Never See them.

Privately drop a drop of water or Drink, about the bigness of twopence, on a Table before where you sit, and let anybody shuffle the Pack of Cards, and then taking them into your hand, place a Candle on the Table before you, for this trick is best to be done by Candlelight, and holding down your head, lift the Cards above the Brim of your Hat, close to your head, that the light of the Candle may shine on the Cards, then in the drop of water (Like a Looking glass) you shall see every speck of each Card before you drop them, which you may name, or putting your finger upon the spots, you may say that you feel them out; then lay down your first Card, and name the next, as for Example your first Card was the Duce of Clubs, the next is the Five of Spades, and so of the rest.

How to make a Tobacco Pipe or Knife leap out of a pot of Drink.

You must have a piece of Steel Spring, bend it, and put it into the middle of a Card; then take a Pipe or Knife, and fix the end of it on the Card, and as the Card is softened by the Liquor, it breaks, and the Spring gives way. By that means the Pipe jumps into your hand.

How to make an Egg mount up in the Air. Admirable to the Spectators.

Take an Egg and make a hole in each end with a pin, then suck or blow out both White and Yolk, then take some May dew, which you may soon get any Morning, with a clean Napking, to fill the Egg shell with the Dew, and with Sealing wax close up both ends, then get a pike or long pole, and fasten the end of it in the ground, put the egg shell that has dew in it close at the bottom of the Pike, but be sure that it is when the Sun is in his full strength, so by degrees, the egg as it is supposed to be, will Mount up to the top of the Pole, and if the Sun keeps shining, it will mount higher than the Pole for the dew that falls at night is attracted or drawn up by the heat of the sun the next day.

A sure way to catch a Pick-pocket.

Buy 18 or 20 Fish Hooks, and sow them around about towards the upper part of your Pockets, with the points of them downwards, that so when the diver is nibling at the bait he cannot disentangle himself without your leave.

How to carry a glass of Liquor with the mouth Downwards.

Take a Quartern Glass, and almost fill it with Liquor, then take a piece of stiff writing paper, somewhat larger than the glass, then put it on the glass, and with the palm of your hand squeeze it down, at the same time turn the glass upside down with your hand still holding fast that it cannot take the Air, then take your hand away, and you may carry it about the house without spilling one drop.

How to write that the Letters shall appear all fire.

Take a piece of Phosphorus between your fingers and your Thumb and write with it on the Wall, Table or any other place in the room, then send in a person in the Dark that knows nothing of the Matter, they seeing the writing will be very much surprised at it, for it will appear like a glow worm or Fire.

How you may Fire off Gun-Powder, great Gun, or Cannon, without the help of match of Fire.

Take a bit of Phosphorus, about the bigness of a Pins head, and put it to the gun Powder, then take an end of a stick and rub untill it's hot and touch the Gun-Powder where the Phosphorus is, and it will fire as well as if you had a lighted match.

How to cut a card into a Chain of 40 or 50 Links.

You must take a card and split it about half a quarter of an inch, on both sides, then crease it down and take a penknife and cut it from crease to crease, as even and as fine as you can, then take your knife and lift up every other cut to the end: Then cut it through the split part, then lift up the contrary and cut as it before, then you must take a pair of Scissars and every cut that was before, you must cut through with your scissars, and twill fall in a chain directly.

How to make a Red Rose white.

You must get a half penny worth of Brimstone, and beat it to Powder, then put it on a Stone or a plate of tin, and set it on fire, and hold it under the rose so that the smoke may ascend to it: By this method you may change the colour of 50 Red Roses in half an Hour to a Pure White.

How to put a Candle under water, and it shall not go out, or a Hankerchief and it shall not be wet.

Take a Cup, or Rather a Glass, not too small, and across the mouth fit in a little stick, and on the stick fasten a lighted candle, with the flame towards the bottom of the glass. Then carefully put the glass into the water, so that all round the brim may touch the water at the same time. So that keeping the glass steady, you may put it quite under the water, and you shall see it burning under the water, and you may so take it out again burning, if you do it Carefully and Softly and in due time.

In the same manner you may put a Hankerchief under Water and it shall not be wet, if you cruch it close together at the bottom of the glass.

How to anoint your Hands, Face, Hat, or Wigg; and make it appear, as if it were all on Fire.

Take 3 grain of Phosphorus, and dissolve it in One Shillings worth of Oyl of Cloves, then rub it on any part, and in the night it will appear very surprising.

CONJURATIONS FOR FAIRIES

From MS. Ashmole, written about the year 1600.

AN EXCELLENT WAY TO GETT A FAYRIE, BUT FOR MYSELFE I CALL MARGARETT BARRANCE, BUT THIS WILL OBTEINE ANY ONE THAT IS NOT ALLREADY BOWND.

First, gett a broad square cristall or Venus glasse, in length and breadth three inches. Then lay that glasse or christall in the bloud of a white henne three Wesnesdayes, or three Fridayes; then take it out and wash it with holy aqua, and fumigate it. Then take three hazle stickes or wandes of an yeare groth, pill them fayre and white, and make soe longe as you write the spiritts name, or fayries name, which you call three times, on every sticke being made flatt one side. Then bury them under some hill, whereas you suppose fayries haunt, the Wednesday before you call her, and the Friday followinge take them uppe, and call her at eight or three or ten of the clocke, which be good plannetts and howres for that turne. But when you call, be in cleane life, and turne thy face towardes the East; and when you have her, bind her to that stone ore glasse.

A CONJURATION FOR A FAIRY

I connure thee, I excorsize thee, I compell, command, constraine and bind thee, spirit N., by the power of Tetragrammaton and Athanatos and Aglay, and by the vertue of the great Tetragrammaton, that thou appeare to mine owne person visible to the sight of mine owne eyes, so that I may see and deserne thee, and that thou shew me the truth of all thinges that I shall demand of thee, without decept, fraud or guile; nether shalt thou hurt or crack this stone, nor mee, nor any other creature, in mind, soule or body; nether shalt thou by cavell or deceat leave mee, nor depart from my presence or commandment, untill thou have made me tru answere; and to shew mee true signes to all questiones and demands. This I abjure, conjure, and commande thee, etc., Amen.

TO GOE INVISIBLE

Take water, and powre it upon an antt-hill, and looke imediatly after, and you shall finde a stone of divers colours seute from the faerie. This beare in thy righte hande, and you shall goe invisible.

A RECIPE FOR CHRISTMAS PASTRY

(Presumed A.D. 1394)

Take Fesaunt, Boare and Chykenne, or Caponne, of eche oone, with two partruchis and two Pygeonnes; and smite hem on peeces and pyke clene away therfrom all ye boonys that ye can, and therewith do into a paste made craftely ynne ye lykenes of a byrdes bodye with ye lyuours and hertys and twy kydneis of shepe and farcys (force-meat) and eyren (eggs) made ynto balles. Cast therto poudre of pepyr, salte, spyce, eysell (vinegar) and funges (mushrooms) pickled and thanne (then) take ye boonys and let hem seethe ynne a pot to make a gode broth for it; with ye hede of oone of ye byrdes stucke at ye oone ende of ye paste and a grete tayle at ye other and dyvers of hys longe fedyrs sette ynne cunnynglye alle aboute hym.

TO MAKE A CHRISTMAS CAKE THAT WILL KEEP TILL EASTER

(A Recipe of 1709)

Take 4 pounds of butter, break it in a pan and work it well with your hands till it cooms to a crame, then take a quart of ale yest, straine it into the butter but still keep working it; then take the yolks of tenn eggs and beat them and put to them half a pint of rose water or orange flower water, and all most a quart of cream, and straine them in the butter and yest but cease not working on it till you put it into the hoope, then take half a peck of the finest flower, and a pound of loafe sugar beaten fine, and a quart of an ounce of mace beaten and mingled with the flower, when you have work all together very well so that you have made it soft againe with your working, then put half your flower and work that well together, then take 6 pounds of currants pick'd wash'd and dryed and mingled with the rest of the flower and by degrees put them to the butter and work them very well in it, so that they be very well mingled in it. Your kake must be as stiff as it will stick about the pan and your hands. Set it in the oven, then heat a little batter and let it stand two hours or more.

"A MODERATE DINNER"

The first course should consist of "sixteen full dishes; that is, dishes of meat that are of substance, and not empty, or for show—as thus, for example; first, a shield of brawn, with mustard; secondly, a boyl'd capon; thirdly, a boyl'd piece of beef; fourthly, a chine of beef, rosted; fifthly, a neat's tongue, rosted; sixthly, a pig, rosted; seventhly, chewets baked; eighthly, a goose, rosted; ninthly, a swan, rosted; tenthly, a turkey, rosted; the eleventh, a haunch of venison, rosted; the twelfth, a pasty of venison; the thirteenth, a kid, with a pudding in the belly; the fourteenth, an olive-pye; the fifteenth, a couple of capons; the sixteenth, a custard, or dowsets. Now, to these full dishes may be added, sallets, fricases, quelque choses, and devised paste, as many dishes more, which make the full service no less than two and thirty dishes; which is as much as can conveniently stand on one table, and in one mess. And after this manner you may proportion both your second and third courses, holding fulness on one half of the dishes, and show in the other; which will be both frugal in the splendour, contentment to the guest, and much pleasure and delight to the beholder.

From GERVASE MARKHAM'S "English Housewife" (1653).

A VENETIAN CHRISTMAS DISH

Amongst the customs observed on Christmas-eve, the Venetians eat a kind of pottage, which they call torto de lasagne, composed of oil, onions, paste, parsley, pine nuts, raisins, currants, and candied orange peel.

FROISSART'S CHRISTMAS WITH THE COUNT DE FOIX

(In 1388, Froissart, the chronicler, visited the Court of the famous Gaston Count de Foix, in the South of France. His descriptions of the Count's entourage and life are among the most picturesque in his "Chronicles.")

In such manner did the Count de Foix live, when he quitted his chamber at midnight, for supper, twelve servants bore each a large lighted torch before him, which were placed near his table, and gave a brilliant light to the apartment. No one spoke to him at table unless he first began a conversation. He commonly ate heartily of poultry, but only the wings and thighs; for in the day time, he neither ate nor drank much.

He had great pleasure in hearing minstrels, as he himself was proficient in the science, and made his secretaries sing songs, ballads and roundelays.

He remained at table about two hours; and was pleased when fanciful dishes were served up to him, which having seen, he immediately sent them to the tables of his Knights and Squires.

On Christmas day, were seated at his table four bishops of his own Country—two Clementists and two Urbanists.

The Bishops of Pamiers and Lescar, Clementists, were seated at top, and next to them the Bishops of Aire and of Rou, on the borders of the Bordelois, and Bayonne, Urbanists: the Count de Foix sat next, then the Viscount de Roquebertin, a Gascon, the Viscount de Bruniquel, the Viscount de Gousserant, then an English Knight Called Sir William Willoughby, whom the Duke of Lancaster at that time residing at Bordeaux had sent thither. At another table were five abbots and two Arragonian Knights, called Sir Raymond de Montflorentin and Sir Martin de Ruane. At another table were seated Knights and Squires from Gascony and Bigorre. Sir Espaing de Lyon, Sir Siquart de Bois Verdun, Sir Nouvans de Nouvailles and Sir Peter de Vaux, in Bearn, were chief stewards of the hall. The Count's bastard-brothers, Sir Ernaut Guillaume and Sir Peter de Bearn, waited, and his two bastard-sons, Sir Evan de l' Echelle placed the dishes, and Sir Gracien served him with wine. There were very many minstrels in the hall, as well as those belonging to the Count, as to the strangers, who at their leisure, played away their minstrelsy. This day the Count gave to the minstrels and heralds five hundred francs among them; and he clothed the minstrels of the Duke de Touraine who were there with cloth of gold, trimmed with ermine, which dress were valued at two hundred francs. The dinner lasted until four o'clock in the afternoon.

CHRISTMAS AT CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, LONDON

Let me have leave to remember the festivities at Christmas, when the richest of us would club our stock to have a gaudy day, sitting round the fire, replenished to the height with logs; and the pennyless and he that could contribute nothing, partook in all the mirth and in some of the substantialities of the feasting; the carol sung by night at that time of the year, which, when a young boy, I have so often laid awake from seven, (the hour of going to bed) till ten, when it was sung by the older boys and monitors, and have listened to it in their rude chanting, till I have been transported to the fields of Bethlehem, and the song of which was sung at that season by the angels' voices to the shepherds.

CHARLES LAMB.

HODENING IN KENT

At Ramsgate, in Kent, they begin the festivities of Christmas by a curious musical process. A party of young people procure the head of a dead horse, which is affixed to a pole about four feet in length, a string is tied to the lower jaw, a horse cloth is then attached to the whole, under which one of the party gets, and by frequently pulling the string keeps up a loud snapping noise, and is accompanied by the rest of the party grotesquely habited and ringing hand-bells. They thus proceed from house to house, sounding their bells and singing carols and songs. They are commonly gratified with beer and cake, or perhaps with money. This is provincially called a *hodening*; and the figure above described a "hoden," or wooden horse.

This curious ceremony is also observed in the Isle of Thanet on Christmas-eve, and is supposed to be an ancient relic of a festival ordained to commemorate our Saxon ancestors landing in that island.

CHRISTMAS ON A BATTLESHIP IN 1675

The Rev. Henry Teonge, chaplain of a British ship of war, gives the following description of Christmas Day in 1675: "Crismas Day wee keepe thus: At four in the morning our trumpeters all doe flatt their trumpetts, and begin at our captain's cabin, and thence to all the officers' and gentlemen's cabins; playing a levite at each cabine door, and bidding good morrow, wishing a merry Crismas. After they goe to their station, viz. on the poope, and sound three levitts in honour of the morning. At ten we goe to prayers and sermon; text, Zacc. ix, 9. Our captaine had all his officers and gentlemen to dinner with him, where wee had excellent good fayre: a ribb of beefe, plumb-puddings, minct pyes, &c., and plenty of good wines of severall sorts; dranke healths to the king, to our wives and friends, and ended the day with much civill myrth."

Teonge thus describes the ensuing Twelfth Day. "Very ruff weather all the last night, and all this day. Wee are now past Zante; had wee beene there this day, wee had seene a greate solemnity; for this day being 12 day, the Greeke Bishop of Zante doth (as they call it) baptise the sea, with a greate deale of ceremonie, sprinkling their gallys and fishing-tackle with holy water. But wee had much myrth on board, for wee had a greate kake made, in which was put a beane for the king, a pease for the queen, a cloave for the knave, a forked stick for the cuckold, a ragg for the slutt. The kake was cut into severall pieces in the great cabin, and all put into a napkin, out of which every one took his piece, as out of a lottery; then each piece is broaken to see what was in it, which caused much laughter, to see our leiuetenant prove the coockold, and more to see us tumble one over the other in the cabin, by reason of the ruff weather."

THE LORD OF MISRULE ARRIVES IN LONDON

"There was in the King's House wherever he was lodged a Lord of Misrule, or Master of merry disports, and the like had ye in the house of every nobleman of honour or good worship, were he spiritual or temporal. There was fine and subtle disguisings, masks and mummeries, with playing at cards for counters, nails and points, in every house more for pastime than for gain." (*Against the feast of Christmas every man's house, as also the parish churches, were decked with holy, ivy, bays and whatever the season of the year afforded to be green. The conduits and standards of the streets were likewise garnished.*

In 1551, *just before Shakespeare was born, George Ferrers was the Lord of Misrule.*)

"Mr. Ferrers being lord of the merry disports so pleasantly and wisely behaved himself that the King had great delight in his pastimes. He came by water to London and was conducted through the City with a great company of young lords and gentlemen to the house of the Lord Mayor, where he dined and afterwards had a great banket and at his departure the Lord Mayor gave him a standing cup with a cover of silver gilt, of the value of ten pounds, for a reward; he also set a hogshead of wine and a barrel of beer at his gate for his train that followed him." *STOW.*

(*Mr. Ferrers' company of players and masqueraders was a large one; he had with him "his heir, his other sons, his base sons, counsellors, pages of honour, gentlemen ushers, serveants-at-arms, a provost-marshal, heralds, trumpeters and an orator, a jailer, a footman, jugglers, Irishmen and fools."*)

THE CHRISTMAS PLAY OF ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

As represented in the West of England

Enter FATHER CHRISTMAS

HERE COME I, OLD FATHER CHRISTMAS,
Welcome, or welcome not,
I hope old Father Christmas
Will never be forgot.

I am not come here for to laugh or to jeer,
But for a pocketfull of money, and a skinfull of beer;
To show some sport and pastime,
Gentlemen and ladies in the Christmas time.
If you will not believe what I do say,
Come in the Turkish Knight—clear the way.

Enter the TURKISH KNIGHT

Open your doors, and let me in,
I hope your favors I shall win;
Whether I rise, or whether I fall,
I'll do my best to please you all.
St. George is here, and swears he will come in,
And if he does, I know he'll pierce my skin.
If you will not believe what I do say,
Come in the King of Egypt—clear the way.

Enter the KING OF EGYPT

Here I, the King of Egypt, boldly do appear,
St. George, St. George, walk in, my son and heir.
Walk in, my son St. George, and boldly act thy part,
That all the people here may see thy wondrous art.

Enter SAINT GEORGE

Here come I, St. George, from Britain did I spring,
I'll fight the Dragon bold, my wonders to begin.
I'll clip his wings, he shall not fly;
I'll cut him down, or else I die.

Enter the DRAGON

Who's he that seeks the Dragon's blood,
And calls so angry, and so loud?
That English dog, will he before me stand?
I'll cut him down with my courageous hand.
With my long teeth, and scurvy jaw,
Of such I'd break up half a score,
And stay my stomach, till I'd more.

[ST. GEORGE *and the* DRAGON *fight: the latter is killed.*]

FATHER CHRISTMAS

Is there a doctor to be found
All ready, near at hand,
To cure a deep and deadly wound,
And make the champion stand?

Enter DOCTOR

O! yes, there is a doctor to be found
All ready, near at hand,
To cure a deep and deadly wound,
And make the champion stand.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

What can you cure?

DOCTOR

All sorts of diseases,
Whatever you pleases
The phthisic, the palsy, and the gout;
Whatever disorder, I'll soon pull him out.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

What is your fee?

DOCTOR

Fifteen pounds, it is my fee,
The money to lay down;
But as 'tis such a rogue as he,
I'll cure him for ten pound.
I have a little bottle of Elicumpane,
Here, Jack, take a little of my flip-flop,
Pour it down thy tip-top:
Rise up, and fight again.

[*The* DOCTOR *gives his medicine:* ST. GEORGE *and the* DRAGON *again fight, and the latter is again killed.*]

ST. GEORGE

Here am I, St. George, that worthy champion bold,
And with my sword and spear I've won three crowns of gold:
I fought the fiery dragon, and brought him to the slaughter;
By that I've won fair Sabra, the King of Egypt's daughter.

The TURKISH KNIGHT *advances*

Here come I, the Turkish Knight,
Come from the Turkish land to fight.
I'll fight St. George, who is my foe,
I'll make him yield before I go.
He brags to such a high degree,
He thinks there's none can do the like of he.

ST. GEORGE

Where is the Turk that will before me stand?
I'll cut him down with my courageous hand.

[*They fight: the* KNIGHT *is overcome, and falls on one knee, saying—*

Oh! pardon me, St. George, pardon of thee I crave,
Oh! pardon me this night, and I will be thy slave.

ST. GEORGE

I'll never pardon a Turkish Knight;
So rise thee up again, and try thy might.

[*They fight again, when the* KNIGHT *is killed, and a scene with* FATHER CHRISTMAS *and the* DOCTOR *occurs as before, and the* KNIGHT *is cured. The* DOCTOR *then, according to the stage direction, has a basin of girdy grout given him, and a kick, and is driven out. Sometimes the* GIANT TURPIN *is introduced, but his part is little more than a repetition of the* TURKISH KNIGHT. *If there is a fair* SABRA, *she is generally a mute, and now comes forward to* SAINT GEORGE.]

FATHER CHRISTMAS

Now ladies and gentlemen, your sport is just ended,
So prepare for the box, which is highly commended.
The box it would speak, if it had but a tongue:
Come, throw in your money, and think it no wrong.

FINIS

[*Mrs. Winthrop ("Dolly") comes with her little son Aaron to console Silas Marner after the robbery of his gold.*]

"Dear heart!" said Dolly, pausing before she spoke again. "But what a pity it is you should work of a Sunday, and not clean yourself—if you *didn't* go to church; for if you'd a roasting bit, it might be as you couldn't leave it, being a lone man. But there's the bakehus, if you could make up your mind to spend a twopence on the oven now and then,—not every week, in course—I shouldn't like to do that myself,—you might carry your bit o' dinner there, for it's nothing but right to have a bit o' summat hot of a Sunday, and not to make it as you can't know your dinner from Saturday. But now, upo' Christmas-day, this blessed Christmas as is ever coming, if you was to take your dinner to the bakehus, and go to church, and see the holly and the yew, and hear the anthim, and then take the sacramen', you'd be a deal the better, and you'd know which end you stood on, and you could put your trust i' Them as knows better nor we do, seein' you'd ha' done what it lies on us all to do."

Dolly's exhortation, which was an unusually long effort of speech for her, was uttered in the soothing persuasive tone with which she would have tried to prevail on a sick man to take his medicine, or a basin of gruel for which he had no appetite. Silas had never before been closely urged on the point of his absence from church, which had only been thought of as a part of his general queerness; and he was too direct and simple to evade Dolly's appeal.

"Nay, nay," he said, 'I know nothing o' church. I've never been to church."

"No!" said Dolly, in a low tone of wonderment. Then bethinking herself of Silas's advent from an unknown country, she said, " Could it ha' been as they'd no church where you was born?"

"Oh, yes," said Silas, meditatively, sitting in his usual posture of leaning on his knees, and supporting his head. "There was churches—a many—it was a big town. But I knew nothing of 'em—I went to chapel."

Dolly was much puzzled at this new word, but she was rather afraid of inquiring further, lest "chapel" might mean some haunt of wickedness. After a little thought, she said—

"Well, Master Marner, it's niver too late to turn over a new leaf, and if you've niver had no church, there's no telling the good it'll do you. For I feel so set up and comfortable as niver was, when I've been and heard the prayers, and the singing to the praise and glory o' God, as Mr. Macey gives out—and Mr.

Crackenthorp saying good words, and more partic'lar on Sacramen' Day; and if a bit o' trouble comes, I feel as I can put up wi' it, for I've looked for help i' the right quarter, and gev myself up to Them as we must all give ourselves up to at the last; and if we'n done our part, it isn't to be believed as Them as are above us 'ull be worse nor we are, and come short o' Theirn."

Poor Dolly's exposition of her simple Raveloe theology fell rather unmeaningly on Silas's ears, for there was no word in it that could rouse a memory of what he had known as religion, and his comprehension was quite baffled by the plural pronoun, which was no heresy of Dolly's, but only her way of avoiding a presumptuous familiarity. He remained silent, not feeling inclined to assent to the part of Dolly's speech which he fully understood—her recommendation that he should go to church. Indeed, Silas was so unaccustomed to talk beyond the brief questions and answers necessary for the transaction of his simple business, that words did not easily come to him without the urgency of a distinct purpose.

But now, little Aaron, having become used to the weaver's awful presence, had advanced to his mother's side, and Silas, seeming to notice him for the first time, tried to return Dolly's signs of goodwill by offering the lad a bit of lard-cake. Aaron shrank back a little, and rubbed his head against his mother's shoulder, but still thought the piece of cake worth the risk of putting his hand out for it.

"Oh, for shame, Aaron," said his mother, taking him on her lap, however; "why, you don't want cake again yet awhile. He's wonderful hearty," she went on, with a little sigh—"that he is, God knows. He's my youngest, and we spoil him sadly, for either me or the father must allays hev him in our sight—that we must."

She stroked Aaron's brown head, and thought it must do Master Marner good to see such a " pictur of a child." But Marner, on the other side of the hearth, saw the neat-featured rosy face as a mere dim round, with two dark spots in it.

"And he's got a voice like a bird—you wouldn't think," Dolly went on; " he can sing a Christmas carril as his father's taught him; and I take it for a token as he'll come to good, as he can learn the good tunes so quick. Come, Aaron, stan' up and sing the carril to Master Marner, come."

Aaron replied by rubbing his forehead against his mother's shoulder.

"Oh, that's naughty," said Dolly, gently. "Stan' up, when mother tells you, and let me hold the cake till you've done."

Aaron was not indisposed to display his talents, even to an ogre, under

protecting circumstances; and after a few more signs of coyness, consisting chiefly in rubbing the backs of his hands over his eyes, and then peeping between them at Master Marner, to see if he looked anxious for the "carril," he at length allowed his head to be duly adjusted, and standing behind the table, which let him appear above it only as far as his broad frill, so that he looked like a cherubic head untroubled with a body, he began with a clear chirp, and in a melody that had the rhythm of an industrious hammer,

"God rest you, merry gentlemen,
Let nothing you dismay,
For Jesus Christ our Saviour
Was born on Christmas-day."

Dolly listened with a devout look, glancing at Marner in some confidence that this strain would help to allure him to church.

"That's Christmas music," she said, when Aaron had ended, and had secured his piece of cake again. "There's no other music equil to the Christmas music—'Hark the erol angils sing.' And you may judge what it is at church, Master Marner, with the bassoon and the voices, as you can't help thinking you've got to a better place a'ready—for I wouldn't speak ill o' this world, seeing as Them put us in it as knows best; but what wi' the drink, and the quarrelling, and the bad illnesses, and the hard dying, as I've seen times and times, one's thankful to hear of a better. The boy sings pretty, don't he, Master Marner?"

"Yes," said Silas, absently, "very pretty."

The Christmas carol, with its hammer-like rhythm, had fallen on his ears as strange music, quite unlike a hymn, and could have none of the effect Dolly contemplated. But he wanted to show her that he was grateful, and the only mode that occurred to him was to offer Aaron a bit more cake.

"Oh, no, thank you, Master Marner," said Dolly, holding down Aaron's willing hands. "We must be going home now. And so I wish you good-bye, Master Marner; and if you ever feel anyways bad in your inside, as you can't fend for yourself, I'll come and clean up for you, and get you a bit o' victual, and willing. But I beg and pray of you to leave off weaving of a Sunday, for it's bad for soul and body—and the money as comes i' that way 'ull be a bad bed to lie down on at the last, if it doesn't fly away, nobody knows where, like the white frost. And you'll excuse me being that free with you, Master Marner, for I wish you well—I do. Make your bow, Aaron."

Silas said "Good-bye, and thank you kindly," as he opened the door for Dolly, but he couldn't help feeling relieved when she was gone—relieved that he might weave again and moan at his ease. Her simple view of life and its comforts, by which she had tried to cheer him, was only like a report of unknown objects, which his imagination could not fashion. The fountains of human love and divine faith had not yet been unlocked and his soul was still the shrunken rivulet, with only this difference, that its little groove of sand was blocked up, and it wandered confusedly against dark obstruction.

And so, notwithstanding the honest persuasions of Mr. Macey and Dolly Winthrop, Silas spent his Christmas-day in loneliness, eating his meat in sadness of heart, though the meat had come to him as a neighbourly present. In the morning he looked out on the black frost that seemed to press cruelly on every blade of grass, while the half-icy red pool shivered under the bitter wind; but towards evening the snow began to fall, and curtained from him even that dreary outlook, shutting him close up with his narrow grief. And he sat in his robbed home through the livelong evening, not caring to close his shutters or lock his door, pressing his head between his hands and moaning, till the cold grasped him and told him that his fire was grey.

Nobody in this world but himself knew that he was the same Silas Marner who had once loved his fellow with tender love, and trusted in an unseen goodness. Even to himself that past experience had become dim.

But in Raveloe village the bells rang merrily, and the church was fuller than all through the rest of the year, with red faces among the abundant dark-green boughs—faces prepared for a longer service than usual by an odorous breakfast of toast and ale. Those green boughs, the hymn and anthem never heard but at Christmas—even the Athanasian Creed, which was discriminated from the others only as being longer and of exceptional virtue, since it was only read on rare occasions—brought a vague exulting sense, for which the grown men could as little have found words as the children, that something great and mysterious had been done for them in heaven above, and in earth below, which they were appropriating by their presence. And then the red faces made their way through the black biting frost to their own homes, feeling themselves free for the rest of the day to eat, drink, and be merry, and using that Christian freedom without diffidence.

GEORGE ELIOT

CHRISTMAS AT DINGLEY DELL

THE BEST SITTING ROOM AT MANOR FARM WAS A GOOD, LONG, DARK-panelled room with a high chimney-piece, and a capacious chimney, up which you could have driven one of the new patent cabs, wheels and all. At the upper end of the room, seated in a shady bower of holly and evergreens, were the two best fiddlers, and the only harp, in all Muggleton. In all sorts of recesses, and on all kinds of brackets, stood massive old silver candlesticks with four branches each. The carpet was up, the candles burnt bright, the fire blazed and crackled on the hearth, and merry voices and light-hearted laughter rang through the room. If any of the old English yeomen had turned into fairies when they died, it was just the place in which they would have held their revels.

If anything could have added to the interest of this agreeable scene, it would have been the remarkable fact of Mr. Pickwick's appearing without his gaiters, for the first time within the memory of his oldest friends.

"You mean to dance?" said Wardle.

"Of course I do," replied Mr. Pickwick. "Don't you see I am dressed for the purpose?" Mr. Pickwick called attention to his speckled silk stockings, and smartly-tied pumps.

"*You* in silk stockings!" exclaimed Mr. Tupman jocosely.

"And why not, sir—why not?" said Mr. Pickwick, turning warmly upon him.

"Oh, of course there is no reason why you shouldn't wear them," responded Mr. Tupman.

"I imagine not, sir, I imagine not," said Mr. Pickwick in a very peremptory tone.

Mr. Tupman had contemplated a laugh, but he found it was a serious matter; so he looked grave, and said they were a pretty pattern.

"I hope they are," said Mr. Pickwick, fixing his eyes upon his friend. "You see nothing extraordinary in the stockings, *as* stockings, I trust, sir?"

"Certainly not. Oh, certainly not," replied Mr. Tupman. He walked away; and Mr. Pickwick's countenance resumed its customary benign expression.

"We are all ready, I believe," said Mr. Pickwick, who was stationed with the old lady at the top of the dance, and had already made four false starts, in his excessive anxiety to commence.

"Then begin at once," said Wardle. "Now!"

Up struck the two fiddles and the one harp, and off went Mr. Pickwick

into hands across, when there was a general clapping of hands, and a cry of "Stop, stop!"

"What's the matter!" said Mr. Pickwick, who was only brought to, by the fiddles and harp desisting, and could have been stopped by no other earthly power, if the house had been on fire.

"Where's Arabella Allen?" cried a dozen voices.

"And Winkle?" added Mr. Tupman.

"Here we are!" exclaimed that gentleman, emerging with his pretty companion from the corner; as he did so, it would have been hard to tell which was the redder in the face, he or the young lady with the black eyes.

"What an extraordinary thing it is, Winkle," said Mr. Pickwick, rather pettishly, "that you couldn't have taken your place before."

"Not at all extraordinary," said Mr. Winkle.

"Well," said Mr. Pickwick, with a very expressive smile, as his eyes rested on Arabella, "well, I don't know that it *was* extraordinary, either, after all."

However, there was no time to think more about the matter, for the fiddles and harp began in real earnest. Away went Mr. Pickwick—hands across—down the middle to the very end of the room, and half-way up the chimney, back again to the door—poussette everywhere—loud stamp on the ground—ready for the next couple—off again—all the figure over once more—another stamp to beat out the time—next couple, and the next, and the next again—never was such going! At last, after they had reached the bottom of the dance, and full fourteen couple after the old lady had retired in an exhausted state, and the clergyman's wife had been substituted in her stead, did that gentleman, when there was no demand whatever on his exertions, keep perpetually dancing in his place, to keep time to the music: smiling on his partner all the while with a blandness of demeanour which baffles all description.

Long before Mr. Pickwick was weary of dancing, the newly-married couple had retired from the scene. There was a glorious supper down-stairs, notwithstanding, and a good long sitting after it.

* * * * * * * *

"And so your family has games in the kitchen to-night, my dear, has they?" inquired Sam of Emma.

"Yes, Mr. Weller," replied Emma; "we always have on Christmas eve. Master wouldn't neglect to keep it up on any account."

"Your master's a wery pretty notion of keepin' anythin' up, my dear," said

Mr. Weller; "I never see such a sensible sort of man as he is, or such a reg'lar gen'l'm'n."

"Oh, that he is!" said the fat boy, joining in the conversation; "don't he breed nice pork!" The fat youth gave a semi-cannibalic leer at Mr. Weller, as he thought of the roast legs and gravy.

"Oh, you've woke up, at last, have you?" said Sam.

The fat boy nodded.

"I'll tell you what it is, young boa constructer," said Mr. Weller, impressively; "if you don't sleep a little less, and exercise a little more, wen you comes to be a man you'll lay yourself open to the same sort of personal inconwenience as was inflicted on the old gen'l'm'n as wore the pigtail."

"What did they do to him?" inquired the fat boy, in a faltering voice.

"I'm a-goin' to tell you," replied Mr. Weller; "he was one o' the largest patterns as was ever turned out—reg'lar fat man, as hadn't caught a glimpse of his own shoes for five-and-forty-year."

"Lor'!" exclaimed Emma.

"No, that he hadn't, my dear," said Mr. Weller; " and if you'd put an exact model of his own legs on the dinin' table afore him, he wouldn't ha' known 'em. Well, he always walks to his office with a wery handsome gold watch-chain hanging out, about a foot and a quarter, and a gold watch in his fob pocket as was worth—I'm afraid to say how much, but as much as a watch can be—a large, heavy, round manufacter, as stout for a watch, as he was for a man, and with a big face in proportion. 'You'd better not carry that 'ere watch,' says the old gen'l'm'n's friends, 'you'll be robbed on it,' says they. 'Shall I?' says he. 'Yes, you will,' says they. 'Vell,' says he, 'I should like to see the thief as could get this here watch out, for I'm blest if *I* ever can, it's such a tight fit,' says he; 'and venever I wants to know what's o'clock, I'm obliged to stare into the bakers' shops,' he says. Well, then he laughs as hearty as if he was a-goin' to pieces, and out he walks agin' vith his powdered head and pigtail, and rolls down the Strand, vith the chain hangin' out furder than ever, and the great round watch almost bustin' through his grey kersey smalls. There warn't a pickpocket in all London as didn't take a pull at that chain, but the chain 'ud never break, and the watch 'ud never come out, so they soon got tired o' dragging such a heavy old gen'l'm'n along the pavement, and he'd go home and laugh till the pigtail wibrated like the penderlum of a Dutch clock. At last, one day the old gen'l'm'n was a rollin' along, and he sees a pickpocket as he know'd by sight, a-comin' up, arm in arm

vith a little boy vith a wery large head. 'Here's a game,' says the old gen'l'm'n to himself, 'they're a-goin' to have another try, but it won't do!' So he begins a-chucklin' wery hearty, wen, all of a sudden, the little boy leaves hold of the pick-pocket's arm, and rushes headforemost straight into the old gen'l'm'n's stomach, and for a moment doubles him right up vith the pain. 'Murder!' says the old gen'l'm'n. 'All right, sir,' says the pickpocket, a wisperin' in his ear. And wen he come straight agin, the watch and chain was gone, and what's worse than that, the old gen'l'm'n's digestion was all wrong ever artervards, to the wery last day of his life; so just you look about you, young feller, and take care you don't get too fat."

As Mr. Weller concluded this moral tale, with which the fat boy appeared much affected, they all three repaired to the large kitchen, in which the family were by this time assembled, according to annual custom on Christmas eve, observed by old Wardle's forefathers from time immemorial.

From the centre of the ceiling of this kitchen, old Wardle had just sus-pended, with his own hands, a huge branch of mistletoe, and this same branch of mistletoe instantaneously gave rise to a scene of general and delightful struggling and confusion; in the midst of which, Mr. Pickwick, with a gal-lantry that would have done honour to a descendant of Lady Tollimglower herself, took the old lady by the hand, led her beneath the mystic branch, and saluted her in all courtesy and decorum. The old lady submitted to this piece of practical politeness with all the dignity which befitted so important and serious a solemnity, but the younger ladies, not being so thoroughly imbued with a superstitious veneration for the custom; or imagining that the value of a salute is very much enhanced if it cost a little trouble to obtain it: screamed and struggled, and ran into corners, and threatened and remonstrated, and did everything but leave the room, until some of the less adventurous gentlemen were on the point of desisting, when they all at once found it useless to resist any longer, and submitted to be kissed with a good grace. Mr. Winkle kissed the young lady with the black eyes, and Mr. Snodgrass kissed Emily, and Mr. Weller, not being particular about the form of being under the mistletoe, kissed Emma and the other female servants, just as he caught them. As to the poor relations, they kissed everybody, not even excepting the plainer portions of the young-lady visitors, who, in their excessive confusion, ran right under the mistletoe, as soon as it was hung up, without knowing it! Wardle stood with his back to the fire, surveying the whole scene, with the utmost satisfaction; and

the fat boy took the opportunity of appropriating to his own use, and summarily devouring, a particularly fine mince-pie, that had been carefully put by for somebody else.

Now, the screaming had subsided, and faces were in a glow, and curls in a tangle, and Mr. Pickwick, after kissing the old lady as before mentioned, was standing under the mistletoe, looking with a very pleased countenance on all that was passing around him, when the young lady with the black eyes, after a little whispering with the other young ladies, made a sudden dart forward, and, putting her arm round Mr. Pickwick's neck, saluted him affectionately on the left cheek; and before Mr. Pickwick distinctly knew what was the matter, he was surrounded by the whole body, and kissed by every one of them.

It was a pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick in the centre of the group, now pulled this way, and then that, and first kissed on the chin, and then on the nose, and then on the spectacles: and to hear the peals of laughter which were raised on every side; but it was a still more pleasant thing to see Mr. Pickwick, blinded shortly afterwards with a silk handkerchief, falling up against the wall, and scrambling into corners, and going through all the mysteries of blind-man's buff, with the utmost relish for the game, until at last he caught one of the poor relations, and then had to evade the blind-man himself, which he did with a nimbleness and agility that elicited the admiration and applause of all beholders. The poor relations caught the people who they thought would like it, and, when the game flagged, got caught themselves. When they were all tired of blind-man's buff, there was a great game at snap-dragon, and when fingers enough were burned with that, and all the raisins were gone, they sat down by the huge fire of blazing logs to a substantial supper, and a mighty bowl of wassail, something smaller than an ordinary wash-house copper, in which the hot apples were hissing and bubbling with a rich look, and a jolly sound, that were perfectly irresistible.

"This," said Mr. Pickwick, looking round him, "this is, indeed, comfort."

"Our invariable custom," replied Mr. Wardle. "Everybody sits down with us on Christmas eve, as you see them now—servants and all; and here we wait, until the clock strikes twelve, to usher Christmas in, and beguile the time with forfeits and old stories. Trundle, my boy, rake up the fire."

Up flew the bright sparks in myriads as the logs were stirred. The deep red blaze sent forth a rich glow, that penetrated into the furthest corner of the room, and cast its cheerful tint on every face.

"Come," said Wardle, "a song—a Christmas song! I'll give you one, in default of a better."

"Bravo!" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Fill up," cried Wardle. "It will be two hours, good, before you see the bottom of the bowl through the deep rich colour of the wassail; fill up all round, and now for the song."

Thus saying, the merry old gentleman, in a good, round, sturdy voice, commenced without more ado:

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

I care not for Spring; on his fickle wing
Let the blossoms and buds be borne:
He woos them amain with his treacherous rain,
And he scatters them ere the morn.
An inconstant elf, he knows not himself,
Nor his own changing mind an hour,
He'll smile in your face, and, with wry grimace,
He'll wither your youngest flower.

Let the Summer sun to his bright home run,
He shall never be sought by me;
When he's dimmed by a cloud I can laugh aloud,
And care not how sulky he be!
For his darling child is the madness wild
That sports in fierce fever's train;
And when love is too strong, it don't last long,
As many have found to their pain.

A mild harvest night, by the tranquil light
Of the modest and gentle moon,
Has a far sweeter sheen, for me, I ween,
Than the broad and unblushing noon.
But every leaf awakens my grief,
As it lieth beneath the tree;
So let Autumn air be never so fair,
It by no means agrees with me.

But my song I troll out, for Christmas *stout,*
The hearty, the true, and the bold;
A bumper I drain, and with might and main
Give three cheers for this Christmas old!
We'll usher him in with a merry din
That shall gladden his joyous heart,
And we'll keep him up, while there's bite or sup,
And in fellowship good, we'll part.

In his fine honest pride, he scorns to hide,
One jot of his hard-weather scars;
They're no disgrace, for there's much the same trace
On the cheeks of our bravest tars.
Then again I sing 'till the roof doth ring,
And it echoes from wall to wall—
To the stout old wight, fair welcome to-night,
As the King of the Seasons all!

This song was tumultuously applauded—for friends and dependents make a capital audience—and the poor relations, especially, were in perfect ecstasies of rapture. Again was the fire replenished, and again went the wassail round.

"How it snows!" said one of the men, in a low tone.

"Snows, does it?" said Wardle.

"Rough, cold night, sir," replied the man; "and there's a wind got up, that drifts it across the fields, in a thick white cloud."

"What does Jem say?" inquired the old lady. "There ain't anything the matter, is there?"

"No, no, mother," replied Wardle; "he says there's a snow-drift, and a wind that's piercing cold. I should know that, by the way it rumbles in the chimney."

"Ah!" said the old lady, "there was just such a wind, and just such a fall of snow, a good many years back, I recollect—just five years before your poor father died. It was a Christmas eve, too; and I remember that on that very night he told us the story about the goblins that carried away old Gabriel Grub."

"The story about what?" said Mr. Pickwick.

"Oh, nothing, nothing," replied Wardle. "About an old sexton, that the good people down here suppose to have been carried away by goblins."

"Suppose!" ejaculated the old lady. "Is there anybody hardy enough to dis-

believe it? Suppose! Haven't you heard ever since you were a child, that he *was* carried away by the goblins, and don't you know he was?"

"Very well, mother, he was, if you like," said Wardle, laughing. "He *was* carried away by goblins, Pickwick; and there's an end of the matter."

"No, no," said Mr. Pickwick, "not an end of it, I assure you; for I must hear how, and why, and all about it."

Wardle smiled, as every head was bent forward to hear; and filling out the wassail with no stinted hand, nodded a health to Mr. Pickwick, and began as follows:

* * * * * * * * *

THE STORY OF THE GOBLINS WHO STOLE A SEXTON

"In an old abbey town, down in this part of the country, a long, long while ago—so long, that the story must be a true one, because our great grandfathers implicitly believed it—there officiated as sexton and grave-digger in the churchyard, one Gabriel Grub. It by no means follows that because a man is a sexton, and constantly surrounded by the emblems of mortality, therefore he should be a morose and melancholy man; your undertakers are the merriest fellows in the world; and I once had the honour of being on intimate terms with a mute, who in private life, and off duty, was as comical and jocose a little fellow as ever chirped out a devil-may-care song, without a hitch in his memory, or drained off the contents of a good stiff glass without stopping for breath. But, notwithstanding these precedents to the contrary, Gabriel Grub was an ill-conditioned, cross-grained, surly fellow—a morose and lonely man, who consorted with nobody but himself, and an old wicker bottle which fitted into his large deep waistcoat pocket—and who eyed each merry face, as it passed him by, with such a deep scowl of malice and ill-humour, as it was difficult to meet, without feeling something the worse for.

"A little before twilight, one Christmas eve, Gabriel shouldered his spade, lighted his lantern, and betook himself towards the old churchyard; for he had got a grave to finish by next morning, and, feeling very low, he thought it might raise his spirits, perhaps, if he went on with his work at once. As he went his way, up the ancient street, he saw the cheerful light of the blazing fires gleam through the old casements, and heard the loud laugh and the cheerful shouts of

those who were assembled around them; he marked the bustling preparations for next day's cheer, and smelt the numerous savoury odours consequent thereupon, as they steamed up from the kitchen windows in clouds. All this was gall and wormwood to the heart of Gabriel Grub; and when groups of children bounded out of the houses, tripped across the road, and were met, before they could knock at the opposite door, by half a dozen curly-headed little rascals who crowded round them as they flocked up-stairs to spend the evening in their Christmas games, Gabriel smiled grimly, and clutched the handle of his spade with a firmer grasp, as he thought of measles, scarlet-fever, thrush, hooping-cough, and a good many other sources of consolation besides.

"In this happy frame of mind, Gabriel strode along: returning a short, sullen growl to the good-humoured greetings of such of his neighbours as now and then passed him: until he turned into the dark lane which led to the churchyard. Now, Gabriel had been looking forward to reaching the dark lane, because it was, generally speaking, a nice, gloomy, mournful place, into which the towns-people did not much care to go, except in broad daylight, and when the sun was shining; consequently, he was not a little indignant to hear a young urchin roaring out some jolly song about a merry Christmas, in this very sanctuary, which had been called Coffin Lane ever since the days of the old abbey, and the time of the shaven-headed monks. As Gabriel walked on, and the voice drew nearer, he found it proceeded from a small boy, who was hurrying along, to join one of the little parties in the old street, and who, partly to keep himself company, and partly to prepare himself for the occasion, was shouting out the song at the highest pitch of his lungs. So Gabriel waited until the boy came up, and then dodged him into a corner, and rapped him over the head with his lantern five or six times, to teach him to modulate his voice. And as the boy hurried away with his hand to his head, singing quite a different sort of tune, Gabriel Grub chuckled very heartily to himself, and entered the churchyard: locking the gate behind him.

"He took off his coat, put down his lantern, and getting into the unfinished grave, worked at it for an hour or so, with right good will. But the earth was hardened with the frost, and it was no very easy matter to break it up, and shovel it out; and although there was a moon, it was a very young one, and shed little light upon the grave, which was in the shadow of the church. At any other time, these obstacles would have made Gabriel Grub very moody and miserable, but he was so well pleased with having stopped the small boy's singing, that he took

little heed of the scanty progress he had made, and looked down into the grave, when he had finished work for the night, with grim satisfaction: murmuring as he gathered up his things:

Brave lodgings for one, brave lodgings for one,
A few feet of cold earth, when life is done;
A stone at the head, a stone at the feet,
A rich, juicy meal for the worms to eat;
Rank grass overhead, and damp clay around,
Brave lodgings for one, these, in holy ground!

"'Ho! ho!' laughed Gabriel Grub, as he sat himself down on a flat tombstone which was a favourite resting-place of his; and drew forth his wicker bottle. 'A coffin at Christmas! A Christmas Box. Ho! ho! ho!'

"'Ho! ho! ho!' repeated a voice which sounded close behind him.

"Gabriel paused, in some alarm, in the act of raising the wicker bottle to his lips; and looked round. The bottom of the oldest grave about him, was not more still and quiet, than the churchyard in the pale moonlight. The cold hoar-frost glistened on the tombstones, and sparkled like rows of gems, among the stone carvings of the old church. The snow lay hard and crisp upon the ground; and spread over the thickly-strewn mounds of earth so white and smooth a cover that it seemed as if corpses lay there, hidden only by their winding sheets. Not the faintest rustle broke the profound tranquillity of the solemn scene. Sound itself appeared to be frozen up, all was so cold and still.

"'It was the echoes,' said Gabriel Grub, raising the bottle to his lips again.

"'It was *not*,' said a deep voice.

"Gabriel started up, and stood rooted to the spot with astonishment and terror; for his eyes rested on a form that made his blood run cold.

"Seated on an upright tombstone, close to him, was a strange unearthly figure, whom Gabriel felt at once, was no being of this world. His long fantastic legs which might have reached the ground, were cocked up, and crossed after a quaint, fantastic fashion; his sinewy arms were bare; and his hands rested on his knees. On his short round body, he wore a close covering, ornamented with small slashes; a short cloak dangled at his back; the collar was cut into curious peaks, which served the goblin in lieu of ruff or neckerchief; and his shoes curled up at his toes into long points. On his head, he wore a broad-brimmed sugar-loaf hat, garnished with a single feather. The hat was covered

with the white frost; and the goblin looked as if he had sat on the same tombstone very comfortably, for two or three hundred years. He was sitting perfectly still; his tongue was put out, as if in derision; and he was grinning at Gabriel Grub with such a grin as only a goblin could call up.

"'It was *not* the echoes,' said the goblin.

"Gabriel Grub was paralysed, and could make no reply.

"'What do you do here on Christmas eve?' said the goblin sternly.

"'I came to dig a grave, sir,' stammered Gabriel Grub.

"'What man wanders among graves and churchyards on such a night as this?' cried the goblin.

"'Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!' screamed a wild chorus of voices that seemed to fill the churchyard. Gabriel looked fearfully round—nothing was to be seen.

"'What have you got in that bottle?' said the goblin.

"'Hollands, sir,' replied the sexton, trembling more than ever; for he had bought it of the smugglers, and he thought that perhaps his questioner might be in the excise department of the goblins.

"'Who drinks Hollands alone, and in a churchyard, on such a night as this?' said the goblin.

"'Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!' exclaimed the wild voices again.

"The goblin leered maliciously at the terrified sexton, and then raising his voice, exclaimed:

"'And who, then, is our fair and lawful prize?'

"To this inquiry the invisible chorus replied, in a strain that sounded like the voices of many choristers singing to the mighty swell of the old church organ—a strain that seemed borne to the sexton's ears upon a wild wind, and to die away as it passed onward; but the burden of the reply was still the same, 'Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!'

"The goblin grinned a broader grin than before, as he said, 'Well, Gabriel, what do you say to this?'

"The sexton gasped for breath.

"'What do you think of this, Gabriel?' said the goblin, kicking up his feet in the air on either side of the tombstone, and looking at the turned-up points with as much complacency as if he had been contemplating the most fashionable pair of Wellingtons in all Bond Street.

"'It's—it's—very curious, sir,' replied the sexton, half dead with fright;

'very curious, and very pretty, but I think I'll go back and finish my work, sir, if you please.'

"'Work!' said the goblin, 'what work?'

"'The grave, sir; making the grave,' stammered the sexton.

"'Oh, the grave, eh?' said the goblin; 'who makes graves at a time when all other men are merry, and takes a pleasure in it?'

"Again the mysterious voices replied, 'Gabriel Grub! Gabriel Grub!'

"'I'm afraid my friends want you, Gabriel,' said the goblin, thrusting his tongue further into his cheek than ever—and a most astonishing tongue it was—'I'm afraid my friends want you, Gabriel,' said the goblin.

"'Under favour, sir,' replied the horror-stricken sexton, 'I don't think they can, sir; they don't know me, sir; I don't think the gentlemen have ever seen me, sir.'

"'Oh yes they have,' replied the goblin; 'we know the man with the sulky face and grim scowl, that came down the street to-night, throwing his evil looks at the children, and grasping his burying spade the tighter. We know the man who struck the boy in the envious malice of his heart, because the boy could be merry, and he could not. We know him, we know him.'

"Here, the goblin gave a loud shrill laugh, which the echoes returned twenty-fold: and throwing his legs up in the air, stood upon his head, or rather upon the very point of his sugar-loaf hat, on the narrow edge of the tombstone: whence he threw a somerset with extraordinary agility, right to the sexton's feet, at which he planted himself in the attitude in which tailors generally sit upon the shop-board.

"'I—I—am afraid I must leave you, sir,' said the sexton, making an effort to move.

"'Leave us!' said the goblin, 'Gabriel Grub going to leave us. Ho! ho! ho!'

"As the goblin laughed, the sexton observed, for one instant, a brilliant illumination within the windows of the church, as if the whole building were lighted up; it disappeared, the organ pealed forth a lively air, and whole troops of goblins, the very counterpart of the first one, poured into the churchyard, and began playing at leap-frog with the tombstones: never stopping for an instant to take breath, but 'overing' the highest among them, one after the other, with the most marvellous dexterity. The first goblin was a most astonishing leaper, and none of the others could come near him; even in the extremity of his terror the sexton could not help observing, that while his friends were content to leap over

the common-sized gravestones, the first one took the family vaults, iron railings and all, with as much ease as if they had been so many street posts.

"At last the game reached to a most exciting pitch; the organ played quicker and quicker; and the goblins leaped faster and faster: coiling themselves up, rolling head over heels upon the ground, and bounding over the tombstones like foot-balls. The sexton's brain whirled round with the rapidity of the motion he beheld, and his legs reeled beneath him, as the spirits flew before his eyes: when the goblin king, suddenly darting towards him, laid his hand upon his collar, and sank with him through the earth.

"When Gabriel Grub had had time to fetch his breath, which the rapidity of his descent had for the moment taken away, he found himself in what appeared to be a large cavern, surrounded on all sides by crowds of goblins, ugly and grim; in the centre of the room, on an elevated seat, was stationed his friend of the churchyard; and close beside him stood Gabriel Grub himself, without power of motion.

"'Cold to-night,' said the king of the goblins, 'very cold. A glass of something warm, here!'

"At this command, half a dozen officious goblins, with a perpetual smile upon their faces, whom Gabriel Grub imagined to be courtiers, on that account, hastily disappeared, and presently returned with a goblet of liquid fire, which they presented to the king.

"'Ah!' cried the goblin, whose cheeks and throat were transparent, as he tossed down the flame, 'This warms one, indeed! Bring a bumper of the same, for Mr. Grub.'

"It was in vain for the unfortunate sexton to protest that he was not in the habit of taking anything warm at night; one of the goblins held him while another poured the blazing liquid down his throat; the whole assembly screeched with laughter as he coughed and choked, and wiped away the tears which gushed plentifully from his eyes, after swallowing the burning draught.

"'And now,' said the king, fantastically poking the taper corner of his sugar-loaf hat into the sexton's eye, and thereby occasioning him the most exquisite pain: 'And now, show the man of misery and gloom, a few of the pictures from our own great storehouse!'

"As the goblin said this, a thick cloud which obscured the remoter end of the cavern, rolled gradually away, and disclosed, apparently at a great distance, a small and scantily furnished, but neat and clean apartment. A crowd of little

children were gathered round a bright fire, clinging to their mother's gown, and gambolling around her chair. The mother occasionally rose, and drew aside the window-curtain, as if to look for some expected object: a frugal meal was ready spread upon the table; and an elbow chair was placed near the fire. A knock was heard at the door: the mother opened it, and the children crowded round her, and clapped their hands for joy, as their father entered. He was wet and weary, and shook the snow from his garments, as the children crowded round him, and seizing his cloak, hat, stick, and gloves, with busy zeal, ran with them from the room. Then, as he sat down to his meal before the fire, the children climbed about his knee, and the mother sat by his side, and all seemed happiness and comfort.

"But a change came upon the view, almost imperceptibly. The scene was altered to a small bed-room, where the fairest and youngest child lay dying; the roses had fled from his cheek, and the light from the eye; and even as the sexton looked upon him with an interest he had never felt or known before, he died. His young brothers and sisters crowded round his little bed, and seized his tiny hand, so cold and heavy; but they shrunk back from its touch, and looked with awe on his infant face; for calm and tranquil as it was and sleeping in rest and peace as the beautiful child seemed to be, they saw that he was dead, and they knew that he was an Angel looking down upon, and blessing them, from a bright and happy Heaven.

"Again the light cloud passed across the picture, and again the subject changed. The father and mother were old and helpless now, and the number of those about them was diminished more than half; but content and cheerfulness sat on every face, and beamed in every eye, as they crowded round the fireside, and told and listened to old stories of earlier and bygone days. Slowly and peacefully, the father sank into the grave, and, soon after, the sharer of all his cares and troubles followed him to a place of rest. The few, who yet survived them, knelt by their tomb, and watered the green turf which covered it, with their tears; then rose, and turned away: sadly and mournfully, but not with bitter cries, or despairing lamentations, for they knew that they should one day meet again; and once more they mixed with the busy world, and their content and cheerfulness were restored. The cloud settled upon the picture, and concealed it from the sexton's view.

"'What do you think of *that*?' said the goblin, turning his large face towards Gabriel Grub.

"Gabriel murmured out something about its being very pretty, and looked somewhat ashamed, as the goblin bent his fiery eyes upon him.

"'*You* a miserable man!' said the goblin, in a tone of excessive contempt. 'You!' He appeared disposed to add more, but indignation choked his utterance, so he lifted up one of his very pliable legs, and flourishing it above his head a little, to insure his aim, administered a good sound kick to Gabriel Grub; immediately after which, all the goblins in waiting, crowded round the wretched sexton, and kicked him without mercy: according to the established and invariable custom of courtiers upon earth, who kick whom royalty kicks, and hug whom royalty hugs.

"'Show him some more!' said the king of the goblins.

"At these words, the cloud was dispelled, and a rich and beautiful landscape was disclosed to view—there is just such another, to this day, within half a mile of the old abbey town. The sun shone from out the clear blue sky, the water sparkled beneath his rays, and the trees looked greener, and the flowers more gay, beneath his cheering influence. The water rippled on, with a pleasant sound; the trees rustled in the light wind that murmured among their leaves; the birds sang upon the boughs; and the lark carolled on high her welcome to the morning. Yes, it was morning; the bright, balmy morning of summer; the minutest leaf, the smallest blade of grass, was instinct with life. The ant crept forth to her daily toil, the butterfly fluttered and basked in the warm rays of the sun; myriads of insects spread their transparent wings, and revelled in their brief but happy existence. Man walked forth, elated with the scene; and all was brightness and splendour.

"'*You* a miserable man!' said the king of the goblins, in a more contemptuous tone than before. And again the king of the goblins gave his leg a flourish; again it descended on the shoulders of the sexton; and again the attendant goblins imitated the example of their chief.

"Many a time the cloud went and came, and many a lesson it taught to Gabriel Grub, who, although his shoulders smarted with pain from the frequent applications of the goblins' feet, looked on with an interest that nothing could diminish. He saw that men who worked hard, and earned their scanty bread with lives of labour, were cheerful and happy; and that to the most ignorant, the sweet face of nature was a never-failing source of cheerfulness and joy. He saw those who had been delicately nurtured, and tenderly brought up, cheerful under privations, and superior to suffering that would have crushed many of a

rougher grain, because they bore within their own bosoms the materials of happiness, contentment, and peace. He saw that women, the tenderest and most fragile of all God's creatures, were the oftenest superior to sorrow, adversity, and distress; and he saw that it was because they bore, in their own hearts, an inexhaustible well-spring of affection and devotion. Above all, he saw that men like himself, who snarled at the mirth and cheerfulness of others, were the foulest weeds on the fair surface of the earth; and setting all the good of the world against the evil, he came to the conclusion that it was a very decent and respectable sort of world after all. No sooner had he formed it, than the cloud which closed over the last picture, seemed to settle on his senses, and lull him to repose. One by one, the goblins faded from his sight; and as the last one disappeared, he sunk to sleep.

"The day had broken when Gabriel Grub awoke, and found himself lying, at full length on the flat gravestone in the churchyard, with the wicker bottle lying empty by his side, and his coat, spade, and lantern, all well whitened by the last night's frost, scattered on the ground. The stone on which he had first seen the goblin seated, stood bolt upright before him, and the grave at which he had worked, the night before, was not far off. At first, he began to doubt the reality of his adventures, but the acute pain in his shoulders when he attempted to rise, assured him that the kicking of the goblins was certainly not ideal. He was staggered again by observing no traces of footsteps in the snow on which the goblins had played at leap-frog with the gravestones, but he speedily accounted for this circumstance when he remembered that, being spirits, they would leave no visible impression behind them. So, Gabriel Grub got on his feet as well as he could, for the pain in his back; and brushing the frost off his coat, put it on, and turned his face towards the town.

"But he was an altered man, and he could not bear the thought of returning to a place where his repentance would be scoffed at, and his reformation disbelieved. He hesitated for a few moments; and then turned away to wander where he might, and seek his bread elsewhere.

"The lantern, the spade, and the wicker bottle, were found, that day, in the churchyard. There were a great many speculations about the sexton's fate, at first, but it was speedily determined that he had been carried away by the goblins; and there were not wanting some very credible witnesses who had distinctly seen him whisked through the air on the back of a chestnut horse blind of one eye, with the hind-quarters of a lion, and the tail of a bear. At length all this was

devoutly believed; and the new sexton used to exhibit to the curious, for a trifling emolument, a good-sized piece of the church weathercock which had been accidentally kicked off by the aforesaid horse in his aerial flight, and picked up by himself in the churchyard, a year or two afterwards.

"Unfortunately, these stories were somewhat disturbed by the unlooked-for re-appearance of Gabriel Grub himself, some ten years afterwards, a ragged, contented, rheumatic old man. He told his story to the clergyman, and also to the mayor; and in course of time it began to be received, as a matter of history, in which form it has continued down to this very day. The believers in the weathercock tale, having misplaced their confidence once, were not easily prevailed upon to part with it again, so they looked as wise as they could, shrugged their shoulders, touched their foreheads, and murmured something about Gabriel Grub having drunk all the Hollands, and then fallen asleep on the flat tombstone; and they affected to explain what he supposed he had witnessed in the goblin's cavern, by saying that he had seen the world, and grown wiser. But this opinion, which was by no means a popular one at any time, gradually died off; and be the matter how it may, as Gabriel Grub was afflicted with rheumatism to the end of his days, this story has at least one moral, if it teach no better one—and that is, that if a man turn sulky and drink by himself at Christmas time, he may make up his mind to be not a bit the better for it: let the spirits be never so good, or let them be even as many degrees beyond proof, as those which Gabriel Grub saw in the goblin's cavern."

THE NEW YEAR'S FEAST* ON HIS COMING OF AGE

By CHARLES LAMB

1

THE OLD YEAR BEING DEAD, THE YOUNG LORD, NEW YEAR'S DAY,
Determined on giving, for once and away,
A treat to his friends; and that none might be slighted
All the days in the year to the Feast were invited.

2

The Festivals Stewards were made of the Feast
For providing good cheer they were judges at least;
In arranging their plans, which was done with much haste,
They said their own bounty at last they should taste.

3

The swift-footed Hours left the cards and they found
All the days out with care as they went each their round,
Except Easter Sunday and one or two more,
Who had quitted the dwellings they lived in before.

* This poem is a rendering in verse of a prose composition which appeared in the *London Magazine* for January 1823. The prose version is included in the *Last Essays of Elia*, but this poem, copies of which are extremely rare, has apparently escaped the notice of all bibliographers, and is here reprinted for the first time since its original publication in 1824.

4

It was argued and stiffly debated by some,
That the Fast Days should not be invited to come;
That their lean half-starved faces and black sackcloth vests,
Would disagree much with the rest of the guests.

5

But Christmas Day settled the point in dispute
And all the objectors were instantly mute:
'Twas his wish, and he said it with something of glee,
To see how with Feastings the Fasts would agree.

6

Their dress and the manner in which to appear
Was left to their taste, as you shortly shall hear:
The Vigils alone were requested to come
With their lanthornes to light the good gentlefolks home.

7

All the Days came correctly, each one to their day,
Some smiling, some frowning, some sad and some gay:—
Three hundred and sixty-five covers in all,
On the principal table were laid in the hall.

8

At a sideboard, of various odds and ends made,
An occasional cover moreover was laid,
For the twenty-ninth day of February,
As he chose from the rest of the guests to vary.

9

At last they all came, and they made a rare din,
For Foul Days and Fine Days together came in,
Salutations were various—"Hail, brother Day, hail!"
"Sister Day," said another, "I knew would not fail."

10

Only Lady Day carried herself rather high,
And seemed rather scornful as others went by;
But Twelfth Day came in in a suit white and gold,
And attracted all eyes both of young folks and old.

11

The rest came in colours, some white and some green,
But old Lent and his children in mourning were seen:
Rainy days came in dripping and, as 'twas arranged,
By their sun-shiny friends their stockings were changed.

12

Wedding Day in his old marriage finery came,
It was worse for the wear, but he was not to blame.
Pay Day came in late, but e'en then was detected,
And Domesday sent word that he might be expected.

13

April Fool, as chief jester, a deep plot had laid
To marshal the guests, and some wild work he made;
For the good and bad days he huddled together,
And the days that were fine he set next to wet weather.

14

The twenty-first day of June, I remember,
He sat next the twenty-first day of December;
The former the latter contemptuously eyed,
Like a May-pole a marrow-bone placed side by side.

15

Ash Wednesday as it was concerted was seen
Christmas Day and Lord Mayor's Day wedged in between,
On barons of beef and on turkeys he dined,
A thing he had not done for time out of mind.

16

Then Christmas Day plied him with wassail and wine
Till he hiccup'd and roar'd for the juice of the vine,
While he lustily rail'd out against all dried fish
As a sour hy-po-crit-i-crit-crit-i-cal dish.

17

Then he dipp'd in his hand in a custard that stood
Hard by his left neighbour, declaring 'twas good:
'Till he looked, while all over his black beard it clung,
Like the last of December with icicles hung.

18

Betwixt two of the days a dispute now arose
As to whom it devolv'd the King's health to propose.
Old August the twelfth, in a sorrowful plight,
Asserted his claim both of custom and right.

19

St. George's Day rose, in a rich court dress suit,
Declaring his claim was beyond all dispute;
The King with his council had settled the matter
And why should old August make such a clatter.

20

April Fool was now call'd on the cause to decide,
And the parties agreed his award to abide,
He declared that the right was with August no doubt,
But for peace sake, St. George must the toast now give out.

21

May Day, with a sweetness and manner of tone,
For which, 'mong the days she has ever been known,
Gave the health of the Founder, and hoped that his life
Would be prosperous and happy, devoid of all strife.

22

The Lord of the Feast then arose from the chair,
And acknowledged their toast with a dignified air;
He was happy his Father's old tenants to see,
And hoped that, like him, they should ever agree.

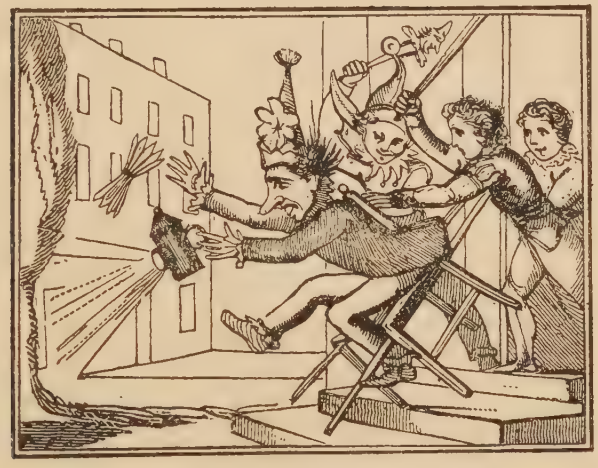
23

If aught seem'd too hard, or too heavy to bear,
Their complaints should be always indulged with his ear;
Their farms he'd improve, and their rents he would lower,
He wished for his due, but he wanted no more.

24

At this the four Quarter Days looked at each other,
As if they would say "What d'ye think of that, brother?"
And April Fool whistled "New Brooms," while a call
For order was made at the end of the hall.

25



A sturdy old rebel, by name full well known,
November the Fifth, cried out in a loud tone,
(When he heard the Lord's speech, which he did to the letter)
"Now the old one is gone, we must hope for a better."

26

This rudeness of his by the guests was resented,
And when 'twas too late the old firebrand repented,
But they bundled him out at once into the street,
As unworthy the honour with gentry to meet.

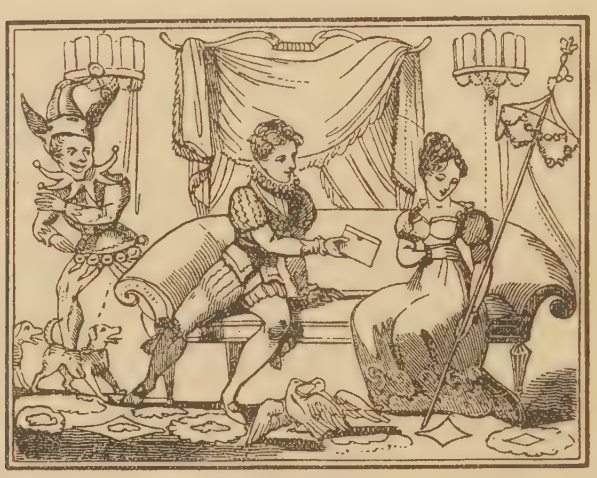
27

Order being restored the new Lord, who in truth,
Was ruffled a little,—he was but a youth—
Gave the health of the Days, and expressed his delight
At meeting them thus, in terms truly polite.

28

Then gracefully turning his head on one side
His guest at the sideboard he quickly espied;
Then between the pink Calends and latter Lam-mas
He placed him and pledged him in one brimming glass.

29



Pretty May all this time by St. Valentine courted,
Sat blushing and smiling, while he was transported;
The Dog Days to be jealous and bark,
But their anger seem'd only to fan up the spark.

30

April Fool, who delights in a good bit of sport,
Clapp'd and halloo'd them on in a mischievous sort,
While these mad ways the Ember Days blew up the flame,
Till the mother of days, Septuagesima, came.

31

She regretted that any a riot should raise,
And diverted attention, by telling the ways
In which lovers of old the fair sex did address
And how ardent the language they used to express.

32

One Master Rogation Day, always, she said
Was putting the question to her on this head;
But she kept him at distance as any could tell,
Who chose to refer to the old Chronicle.

33

Then she talked, and she rattled, and rambled on
To the good old days, and the days that were gone,
And so to the days before the flood came,
Till she proved that her head was half crazy, the dame.

34

Ash Wednesday was called on to give them a song,
He pleaded excuses both earnest and long;
But finding in what a dilemma they'd brought him
He chanted a Carol which Christmas had taught him.

35

Christmas Day followed next, and in notes dull and dreary,
He hit off quite drawling, the tune, Miserere;
Old Mortification himself joined the laugh,
Although he declared it was too bad by half.

36

April Fool was o'erjoy'd thus to see him behave,
Good Friday was seen to look wond'rously grave,
Fair Sunday held up her neat fan for a while,
Lest any should see that the scene forced a smile.

37

Then Shrove Tide, Lord Mayor's Day, and April Fool,
Joined in singing a glee with the Lord of Misrule;
All the days chimed in with them, and merrily sung,
Till the hall with their shouting in loud echoes rung.

38

Next conundrums and quibbles they fell to like mad,
And the question was ask'd who most followers had?
Quarter Days said they had, for creditors came
And followed their footsteps, nor were they to blame.

39

April Fool, who was sober enough, for a feaster
Decided for forty days prior to Easter;
For the debtors outnumber'd the creditors clear,—
And they kept their Lent for the whole of the year.

40

Then Candlemas call'd out for lights to be brought,
But the rest of the days were quite shock'd at the thought;
Fair water in ewers of pure silver went round,
The same lady in washing a long time was found.

41

Day being now ended they call'd for their clothes,
Some great coats, some mantles and some roquelaus;
Lord Mayor's Day went off, closely wrapp'd in a mist,
And 'tis said as he went that some Misses he kiss'd.

42

Shortest Day went away in a murky thick fog,
Which enveloped him round like a little hedge-hog;
Two Vigils, so watchmen are called on high,
Saw Christmas Day home, and then bade him good-bye.

43

Another old Vigil, a stout-made patrol,
Called the Eve of St. Christopher's, jolly old soul,
Perceiving Ash Wednesday inclining to roam
Took him up on his shoulders and carried him home.

44

Old Mortification went floating along,
Singing snatches of Carols and bits of a song.
But very few Aves as you may believe,
At which the old watchman laugh'd much in his sleeve.

45

Longest Day set off Westward in crimson and gold;
Some ladies slight clothed, it was fear'd would catch cold;
But some in one fashion, and some in another,
Went off, after bidding farewell to each other.

46

Pretty May and St. Valentine went off together
In as silvery a twilight as lovers saw ever;
The Evening drew on, New Year's Day went to rest
And the hall was soon clear'd of the last loitering guest.

THE SHORTEST DAY

MR. JORROCKS' NEXT ADVENTURE IN THE HUNTING LINE ORIGINATED IN a very furious letter from a gentleman, signing himself "John Gollarfield, farmer, Hardpye Hill," complaining bitterly of the devastation of his hen-roost and calling loudly for vengeance against the foxes. Accordingly our Master made a meet for Hardpye Hill, instead of Langton Pound, as he intended.

The road to the hill lying through some roomy inclosures, and Christmas having let loose its enterprise upon the country, great was the spurting and racing that marked the line there. Mr. Jorrocks, arrayed in his best pink, jogged pompously on with his cavalcade, receiving the marked attention of the country. Arrived at the hill, he turned into a grass field to give his hounds a roll and hear the news of the day—how Miss Glancy was after Captain Small—how Mrs. Buss had captivated old Frill. Then when the cantering, smoking cover hack swells came up, they resolved themselves into a committee of taste, scrutinising this hound and that, passing their opinions on the pack generally, and on the Bugginson hounds in particular. Some thought they were coarse, some thought they were common, but when they heard they were drafts from the Quorn, they were unanimous in thinking they must be good—especially when Mr. Jorrocks broadly hinted he had given Day ten guineas a couple for them. The noise the party made prevented their hearing sundry ominous moans and lows in the neighbourhood, which gradually rose to a roar, until a simultaneous crash, and cry of "Mind the bull!" drew all eyes to the bank of the adjoining fence, where, with head down and tail up, a great roan bull was seen poising himself preparatory to making a descent upon the field. Down he came with a roar that shook the earth to the very centre, and sent the field flying in all directions. Mr. Jorrocks, who was on foot among his hounds, immediately rushed to his horse, which Ben had let loose, but making a bad shot at the stirrup, he became a point d'appui for the bull, who after him with a vigour and determination that looked very like a finisher. Our Master was carried, clinging to the neck, half across the field in a "now on, now off" sort of way that would have made any one feel very uncomfortable who had an annuity depending on his life. At last he got fairly into his saddle, and setting himself down to ride, he threw his heart boldly over a stiff "on and off," and shoved Xerxes at it in a way that proved too many for the bull. Ploughing up the pasture with his feet, in his effort to stop himself as he neared it, he tossed his great wide-horned head in the air, and uttering a frightful bellow that thundered through the valley, and reverberated on Hardpye Hill, he turned, tail erect, to take a run at some one

else. And having succeeded by the aid of gates in placing a couple more inclosures between them, Mr. Jorrocks sought a rising ground from which he thought over the magnitude of his adventure, and how he would like to have Leech to draw him taking the leap. And having gained breath as he magnified it, and having duly congratulated himself upon his escape, he out with his horn and blew his hounds together, leaving Hardpye Hill as he came, and entering among the anathemas in his Journal the following:

"CONfound all farmers say I, wot don't tie up their bulls!"

A bad beginning in this case did not make a good ending, for though our Master drew on till dark, which it was at half-past two, he never had a touch of a fox, and he sent word to Gollarfield, by the mole-catcher, that he was a "reg'lar humbug," and Pigg desired the man to add that he would fight him for what he pleased.

From Surtees' "Handley Cross."

JORROCKS' JOURNAL

NEW YEAR'S DAY. SICH A CROWD! SICH COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON, and sich screws. Old Doleful grinnin' about on Fair Rosamond like Death on the Pale 'Oss. Found in the Cloud Quarries, but might as well have been in the clouds, the field surrounded it so, and drove the fox into the mouth of the 'ounds. A young gentleman in nankeens and patent leather boots, rode over old Barbara. "That's right!" exclaimed Pigg, "ride amang 'em!—ride amang 'em! Kill a hund or two; we've plenty mair at hyem! It mun be a poor concern that wont stand a hund a-day." Differ from Pigg there though. However, old Barbara ain't worth much. Declared she was the best in the pack notwithstandin'.

Staunton Snivey.—Batsey brought up shavin' water, saying Binjimin wished to be excused 'unting, havin' got the gout. All moonshine, I dare say! Boy has no passion for the chase. Have a good mind to stuff him full of Hunter's pills, and see if they will have any effect upon him. Wot business has a boy like him with the gout? Only for rear admirals, town counsellors, and such like cocks. Caught Charley pinchin' Belinda under the table. Mounted him on Xerxes, as Ben couldn't go. Largish field. Captain Thomson (who never pays his three pounds) observed he never saw a pack of foxhounds without a whip before, and muttered somethin' about Master livin' out of the hounds. Shall set Fleecey at him.

Drew Longford Plantations; then on to Fawsley Wood. Found immediately, but Reynard inclined to hang in cover. No great scent either, but cover surrounded with foot people and little holiday boys. Bin useful in coaxin' them into crowns, to listen to his "hallegations," as he calls his lies. At length Reynard broke from the West end, and made straight for Iver Heath, runnin' a wide circuit by Staunton Snivey, and over the hill, up to Bybury Wood. Scent poor and pace bad. All the holiday hobbledehoy boys treadin' on the 'ounds tails. A short check at Farmer Hayband's, and thought all was over, when Priestess hit it off in a grass field behind the barn, and away they went with the scent improvin' at every yard. Pace changed from an 'unting run to a reg'lar bust, and quite straight over the cream of the country.

How the tail lengthened! A quarter of a mile, increasin' as they went. Young gen'lemen charged to bring home the brush, found their grass ponies beginnin' to gape. Captain Shortflat made Duncan Nevin's mare cry Capevi on Hutton Bank top, and many bein' anxious to give in, great was the assistance he received. Major Spanker would bleed her in the jugular, Mr. Wells thought the

thigh vein, and another thought the toe, so that the mare stood a good chance of bein' bled to death, if Duncan's man who was cruising about hadn't fortinately cast up and saved her from her frinds.

On the hounds went for Crew, passing Limbury, leaving Argod Dingle to the right, over the Lily-white Sand Railway near the station at Stope, pointing for Gore Cross, the fox finally taking refuge in a pig-sty behind the lodge of Button Park. Piggy at home and unfortunately killed, but who would grudge a pig after such a werry fine run?

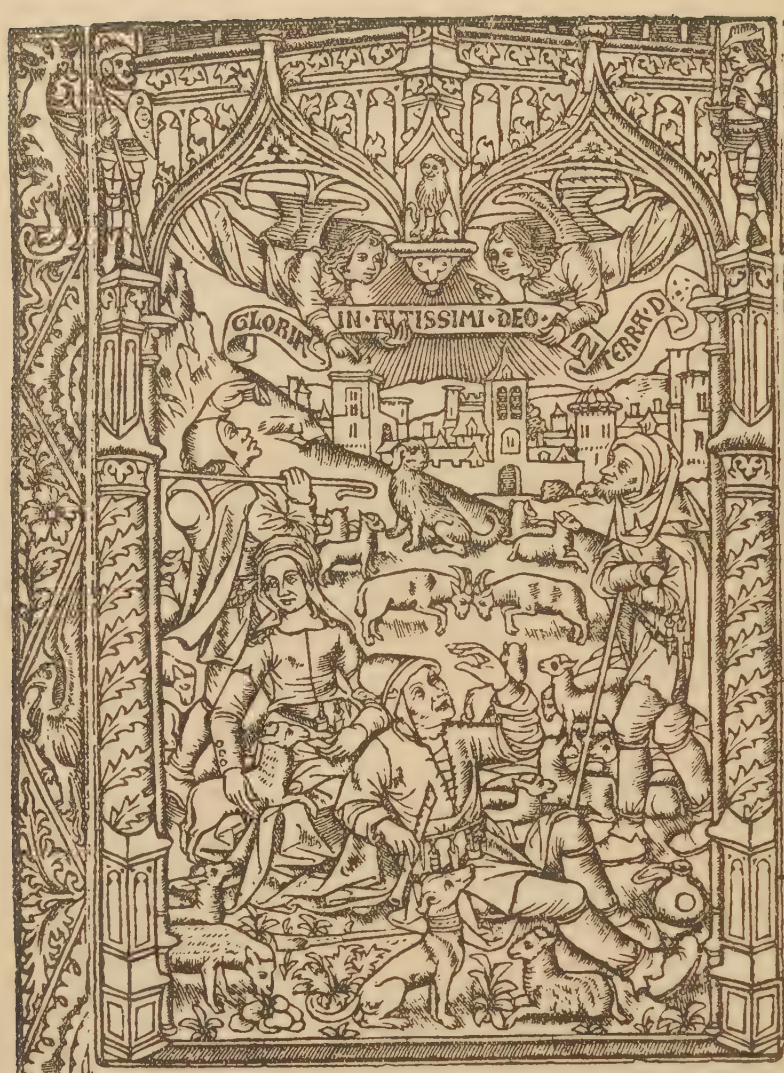
Pigg rode like a trump!—seven falls—knocked a rood of brick-wall down with his 'ead. What a nob that must be! Charley left one of his Yorkshire mat-laps in a hedge—Barnington lost his hat—Hudson his whip—Mr. Ramshay a stirrup, and Captain Martyn his cigar-case. Only seven up out of a field of sixty—day fine and bright—atmosphere clear, as if inclining for frost—hope not.

From Surtees' "Handley Cross."

SECUNDA PASTORUM

PRIMUS PASTOR

LORD, WHAT THESE WEDERS AR COLD, AND I AM YLLE HAPPYD;
I am nere-hande dold, so long have I nappyd;
My legys thay fold, my fyngers ar chappyd,
It is not as I wold, for I am al lappyd
  In sorrow.
In stormes and tempest,
Now in the eest, now in the west,
Wo is hym has never rest
  Myd-day nor morow.
Bot we sely shepardes, that walkys on the moore,
In fayth we are nere-handys out tof the doore;
No wonder, as it standys, if we be poore,
For the tylthe of oure landys lyys falow as the floore,
  As ye ken.
We ar so hamyd,
For-taxed and ramyd,
We ar mayde hand-tamyd,
  Withe thyse gentlery men.
Thus they refe us oure rest, Oure Lady theym wary!
These men that ar lord-fest, thay cause the ploghe tary.
That men say is for the best we fynde it contrary,
Thus ar husbandys opprest, in pointe to myscary,
  On lyfe.
Thus hold thay us hunder,
Thus thay bryng us in blonder,
It were greatte wonder,
  And ever shuld we thryfe.
For may he gett a paynt slefe or a broche now on dayes,
Wo is hym that hym grefe, or onys agane says,
Dar no man hym reprefe, what mastry he mays,
And yit may no man lefe oone word that he says,
  No letter.
He can make purveance,
With boste and bragance,



Quō apparuit ei⁹ ioseph in car-cere existenti.

Duz recumberet cū eis accepit p⁹ nem ⁊ benedi.⁊c.

DEus in adiutorium meum intẽde Oñe ad adiuuandū me festina. Gloria patri et filio. Sicut erat in pricipio. ⁊c. Hyᵖ.

And alle is thrughe mantenance
  Of men that are gretter.
Ther shalle com a swane as prowde as a po,
He must borow my wane, my ploghe also,
Then I am fulle fane to graunt or he go.
Thus lyf we in payne, anger, and wo,
  By nyght and day;
He must have, if he langyd;
If I shuld forgang it,
I were better be hangyd
  Then oones say hym nay.
It dos me good, as I walk thus by myn oone
Of this warld for to talk in maner of mone.
To my shepe wylle I stalk and herkyn anone,
Ther abyde on a balk or sytt on a stone
  Full soyne.
For I trowe, parde,
Trew men if thay be,
We gett more compane
  Or it be noyne.

[*The second and third shepherd arrive, each with his complaint. To cheer themselves they sing a catch, and are then joined by* MAK *a neighbour of ill repute for thievery. After some talk they all betake them to sleep, the shepherds making* MAK *lie down between them so as to keep him under guard. Despite this precaution his thoughts are set on sheepstealing: he rises, while the shepherds sleep, and says:*]

MAK

Now were tyme for a man, that lakkys what he wold,
To stalk prevely than unto a fold,
And neemly to wyrk than, and be not to bold,
For he myght aby the bargan, if it were told
  At the endyng.
Now were tyme for to reylle;
Bot he nedes good counselle
That fayn wold fare weylle,
  And has bot lytylle spendyng.

Bot abowte you a serkylle, as rownde as a moyn,
To I have done that I wylle, tylle that it be noyn,
That ye lyg stone stylle, to that I have doyne,
And I shall say thertylle of good wordes a foyne.
On hight
Over youre heydys my hand I lyft,
Outt go youre een, fordo your syght,
Bot yit I must make better shyft,
And it be right.
Lord, what thay slepe harde, that may ye alle here,
Was I never a shepard, bot now wylle I lere.
If the flok be skard, yit shalle I nyp nere.
How! drawes hederward: now mendys oure chere
Fro sorow.
A fatt shepe I dar say,
A good flese dar I lay,
Eft-whyte when I may,
Bot this wille I borow.

[*He steals the sheep and goes home with it.*]

How, Gylle, art thou in? Gett us som lyght.

UXOR EJUS

Who makys sich dyn this tyme of the nyght?
I am sett for to spyn: I hope not I myght
Ryse a penny to wyn: I shrew them on hight.
So farys
A huswyff that has bene
To be rasyd thus betwene:
There may no note be sene
For sich smalle charys.

MAK

Good wyff, open the hek. Seys thou not what I bryng?

UXOR

I may thole the dray the snek. A, com in, my swetyng.

MAK

Yee, thou thar not rek of my long standing.

UXOR

By the nakyd nek art thou lyke for to hyng.

MAK

Do way:
I am worthy my mete,
For in a strate can I gett
More then thay that swynke and swette
All the long day.
Thus it felle to my lotte, Gylle, I had sich grace.

UXOR

It were a fowlle blot to be hanged for the case.

MAK

I have skapyd, Jelott, oft as hard a glase.

UXOR

Bot so long goys the pott to the water, men says,
At last
Comys it home broken.

MAK

Welle knowe I the token,
Bot let it never be spoken;
Bot com and help fast.
I wold he were flayn; I lyst welle ete:
This twelmothe was I not so fayn of oone shepe mete.

UXOR

Com thay or he be slayn, and here the shepe blete—

MAK

Then myght I be tane: that were a colde swette.
Go spar
The gaytt doore.

UXOR

Yis, Mak,
For and thay com at thy bak—

MAK

Then myght I far, by alle the pak,
The dewille of the war.

UXOR

A good bowrde have I spied, syn thou can none.
Here shall we hym hyde, to thay be gone.
In my credylle abyde. Lett me alone,
And I shalle lyg besyde in chylbed and grone.

MAK

Thou red;
And I shalle say thou was lyght
Of a knave childe this nyght.

UXOR

Now welle is me, day bright,
That ever I was bred.
This is a good gyse and a far cast;
Yit a woman avyse helpys at the last!
I wote never who spyse: agane go thou fast.

MAK

Bot I com or thay ryse, els blawes a cold blast.
I wylle go slepe.
Yit slepys alle this meneye
And I shall go stalk prevely,
As if it had never bene I
That caryed thare shepe.

[MAK *resumes his place between the shepherds. They awake and go to look after their flocks, while* MAK *returns home. A sheep is missed, and* MAK *is suspected. They go to his house. Bidding them tread softly, he offers them drink:*]

MAK

I wold ye dynyd or ye yode, methynk that ye swette.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Nay, nawther mendys oure mode drynke nor mette.

MAK

Why, sir, alys you oght bot goode?

TERCIUS PASTOR

Yee, oure shepe that we gette
Ar stollyn as thay yode. Oure los is grette.

MAK

Syrs, drynkys!
Had I bene thore,
Some shuld have boght it fulle sore.

PRIMUS PASTOR

Mary, som men trowes that ye wore,
And that us forthynkes.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Mak, som men trowys that it shuld be ye.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Aythor ye or youre spouse; so say we.

MAK

Now if ye have suspowse to Gille or to me,
Come and rype oure howse, and then may ye se
Who had hir.
If I any shepe fott,
Aythor cow or stott—
And Gylle, my wyfe, rose nott
Here syn she lade hir.
As I am true and lele, to God here I pray,
That this be the fyrst mele that I shalle ete this day.

[*The shepherds search the house, Gyll upbraiding them and keeping them away from the cradle. They find nothing and take their leave, rather ashamedly. As they go a thought strikes one of them:*]

PRIMUS PASTOR

Gaf ye the chyld any thyng?

SECUNDUS PASTOR

I trow not oone farthyng.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Fast agayne wille I flyng,
Abyde ye me there.
Mak, take it no grefe, if I com to thi barne.

MAK

Nay, thou dos me greatt reprefe, and fowlle has thou farne.

TERCIUS PASTOR

The child wille it not grefe, that lytylle day starne.
Mak, with youre leyfe, let me gyf youre barne
Bot vj pence.

MAK

Nay, do way: he slepys.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Me thynk he pepys.

MAK

When he wakyns he wepys.
I pray you go hence.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Gyf me lefe hym to kys, and lyft up the clowtt.
What the dewille is this? he has a long snowte.

PRIMUS PASTOR

He is merkyd amys. We wate ille abowte.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Ille spon weft, i-wis, ay commys foulle owte.
Ay so?
He is lyke to oure shepe.

TERCIUS PASTOR

How, Gyb! May I pepe?

PRIMUS PASTOR

I trow, kynde wille crepe
Where it may not go.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

This was a qwantt gawde and a far cast.
It was a hee frawde.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Yee, sirs, wast.
Lett bren this bawde and bynd hir fast.
A! fals skawde, hang at the last
So shalle thou.
Wylle ye se how thay swedylle
His foure feytt in the medylle?
Sagh I never in a credylle
A hornyd lad or now.

MAK

Peasse byd I: what! lett be youre fare;
I am he that hym gatt, and yond woman hym bare.

PRIMUS PASTOR

What dewille shall he hatt? Mak? lo God! Makys ayre!

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Lett be alle that. Now God gyf hym care,
I sagh.

UXOR

A pratty child is he
As syttys on a woman's kne;
A dyllydowne, perde.
To gar a man laghe.

TERCIUS PASTOR

I know hym by the eere marke: that is a good tokyn.

MAK

I telle you, syrs, hark: hys noyse was brokyn.
Sythen told me a clerk, that he was forspokyn.

PRIMUS PASTOR

This is a false wark. I wold fayn be wrokyn.
Gett wepyn.

UXOR

He was takyn with an elfe;
I saw it myself.
When the clok stroke twelf
Was he forshapyn.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Ye two ar welle feft, sam in a stede.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Syn thay manteyn thare theft, let do thaym to dede.

MAK

If I trespas eft, gyrd of my heede.
With you wille I be left.

PRIMUS PASTOR

Syrs, do my reede.
For this trespas,
We wille nawther ban ne flyte,
Fyght nor chyte,
Bot have done as tyte,
And cast hym in canvas. [*They toss* MAK.
Lord, what I am sore, in poynt for to bryst.
In fayth I may no more, therfor wylle I ryst.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

As a shepe of vij skore he weyd in my fyst.
For to slepe ay-whore, me thynk that I lyst.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Now I pray you,
Lyg downe on this grene.

PRIMUS PASTOR

On these thefys yit I mene.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Wherto shuld ye tene
So, as I say you?

Angelus cantat 'Gloria in Excelsis': postea dicat.

ANGELUS

Ryse, hyrdmen heynd, for now is he borne,
That shall take fro the feynd that Adam had lorne:
That warloo to sheynd, this nyght is he borne,
God is made youre freynd: now at this morne
He behestys,
At Bedlem go se,
Ther lygys that fre
In a cryb fulle poorely,
Betwyx two bestys.

PRIMUS PASTOR

This was a qwant stevyn that ever yit I hard.
It is a marvelle to nevyn thus to be skard.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Of Godys son of hevyn he spak up ward.
Álle the wod on a levyn me thoght that he gard
Appere.

TERCIUS PASTOR

He spak of a barne
In Bedlem, I you warne.

PRIMUS PASTOR

That betokyns yond starne;
Let us seke hym there.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Say, what was his song? hard ye not how he crakyd it?
Thre brefes to a long.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Yee, mary, he hakt it.
Was no crochett wrong, nor no thyng that lakt it.

PRIMUS PASTOR

For to syng us emong, right as he knakt it,
I can.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Let se how ye croyne.
Can ye bark at the mone?

TERCIUS PASTOR

Hold youre tonges, have done.

PRIMUS PASTOR

Hark after, than.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

To Bedlem he bad that we shuld gang:
I am full fard that we tary to lang.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Be mery, and not sad: of myrth is oure sang,
Ever lastyng glad to mede may we fang,
Withoutt noyse.

PRIMUS PASTOR

Hy we theder forthy;
If we be wete and wery,
To that chyld and that lady
We have it not to lose.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

We fynde by the prophecy—let be youre dyn—
Of David and Isay, and mo then I myn;
Thay prophecyed by clergy, that in a vyrgyn
Shuld he lyght and ly, to slokyn oure syn
  And slake it,
Oure kynde from wo;
For Isay sayd so,
Ecce virgo
  Concipiet a child that is nakyd.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Fulle glad may we be, and abyde that day
That lufly to se, that alle myghtys may.
Lord welle were me, for ones and for ay,
Might I knele on my kne som word for to say
  To that chylde.
Bot the angelle sayd
In a cryb was he layde;
He was poorly arayd,
  Both mener and mylde.

PRIMUS PASTOR

Patryarkes that has bene, and prophetys beforne,
Thay desyryd to have sene this chylde that is borne.
Thay ar gone fulle clene, that have thay lorne.
We shalle se hym, I weyn, or it be morne,
  To tokyn.
When I see hym and fele,
Then wote I fulle weylle
It is true as steylle
  That prophetes have spokyn,
To so poore as we ar that he wold appere,
Fyrst fynd, and declare by his messyngere.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Go we now, let us fare: the place is us nere.

TERCIUS PASTOR

I am redy and yare: go we in fere
To that bright.
Lord, if thi wylles be,
We are lewde alle thre,
Thou grauntt us somkyns gle
To comforth thi wight. [*They enter the stable.*

PRIMUS PASTOR

Haylle, comly and clene: haylle, yong child!
Haylle, maker, as I meyne, of a madyn so mylde.
Thou has waryd, I weyne, the warlo so wylde,
The fals gyler of teyn, now goys he begylde.
Lo, he merys;
Lo, he laghys, my swetyng,
A welfare metyng,
I have holden my hetyng,
Have a bob of cherys.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Haylle, sufferan savyoure, for thou has us soght:
Haylle, frely foyde and floure, that alle thyng has wroght.
Haylle, fulle of favoure, that made alle of noght!
Haylle! I kneylle and I cowre. A byrd have I broght
To my barne.
Haylle, lytylle tyné mop,
Of oure crede thou art crop:
I wold drynk on thy cop,
Lytylle day starne.

TERCIUS PASTOR

Haylle, derlyng dere, fulle of godhede,
I pray the be nere when that I have nede.
Haylle! swete is thy chere: my hart wold blede
To se the sytt here in so poore wede,
With no pennys.

Haylle! put furthe thy dalle,
I bryng the bot a balle:
Have and play the with alle,
And go to the tenys.

MARIA

The fader of heven, God omnypotent,
That sett alle on seven, his son has he sent.
My name couthe he neven and lyght or he went.
I conceyved hym fulle even, thrugh myght as he ment;
And now is he borne.
He kepe you fro wo:
I shalle pray him so;
Telle furth as ye go,
And myn on this morne.

PRIMUS PASTOR

Farewelle, lady, so fare to beholde,
With thy chylde on thi kne.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Bot he lygys fulle cold.
Lord, welle is me: now we go, thou behold.

TERCIUS PASTOR

For sothe alle redy, it semys to be told
Fulle oft.

PRIMUS PASTOR

What grace we have fun.

SECUNDUS PASTOR

Com furth, now as we won.

TERTIUS PASTOR

To syng ar we bun:
Let take on loft.

Explicit pagina pastorum.

GLOSSARY

Aby : *atone for.*
As tyte : *as quickly as possible.*

Bak : *back.*
Balk : *ridge.*
Ban : *curse.*
Barne : *child.*
Bot : *but.*
Bowrde : *jest.*
Bren : *burn.*
Bryst : *burst.*
Bun : *ready.*

Cast : *contrivance.*
Charys : *jobs.*
Chere : *countenance, demeanour.*
Chyte : *chide.*
Cop : *cup.*
Crop : *head.*
Croyne : *croon.*

Dalle : *fist.*
Dold : *stupid.*
Dray : *draw.*

Eft-whyte : *restore.*

Fane : *glad.*
Fang : *take.*
Farne : *fared.*
Feft : *endowed.*
Fest : *fast, fixed.*
Feynd : *fiend.*
Flyte : *scold.*
Fordo : *destroy.*
Forgang : *forego.*
For-shapyn : *transformed.*
For-spokyn : *bewitched.*
Fott : *fetched.*
Foyde : *child.*
Foyne : *few.*
Fun : *found.*

Gard : *cause.*
Gawde : *trick.*
Glase : *slippery place,* or *difficulty.*
Gle : *joy.*
Gyler : *beguiler.*

Hakt : *mastered.*
Hamyd : *crippled.*
Happyd : *circumstanced.*
Hederward : *hither.*
Hee : *high.*
Hek : *inner door.*
Hetyng : *promise.*
Heynd : *gentle.*

Knakt : *performed cleverly.*
Kynde : *kinship.*

Laghe : *laugh.*
Langyd : *desired, longed.*
Lappyd : *enveloped.*
Lele : *loyal.*
Lere : *learn.*
Levyn : *lightning.*
Lorne : *lost.*
Lyg : *lie.*

Mener : *handsome.*
Meneye : *company.*
Mop : *young creature.*

Nere-hande : *nearly.*
Nevyn : *proclaim.*
Nyp : *approach thievishly.*

Owte : *exclamation of pain.*

Paynt-slefe : *painted sleeve.*
Po : *peacock.*

Qwantte : *quaint.*

Ramyd : *over-reached.*
Refe : *deprive.*
Rek : *reckon.*
Reprefe : *reprofe.*
Reylle : *ramble.*
Rype : *ransack.*

Sam : *together.*
Sely : *innocent.*
Serkylle : *circle.*
Sheynd : *reprove* or *shame.*
Skard : *scared.*
Skawd : *scold.*
Slokyn : *slacken.*
Snek : *latch.*
Somkyns : *some kind of.*
Soyne : *soon.*
Spar : *fasten.*
Starne : *star.*
Steylle : *steel.*
Swedylle : *swaddle.*
Stott : *young bull.*
Swynke : *labour.*

Tane : *taken.*
Tene : *trouble.*
Teyn : *sorrow.*
Thole : *suffer.*
Tyne : *tiny.*

Warloo : *wizard.*
Wary : *curse.*
Waryd : *cursed.*
Wepyn : *weapon.*
Weylle : *well.*
Wod : *wood.*
Wote : *know.*
Wrokyn : *revenged.*

Yare : *prepared.*
Yode : *went, ran.*

POEMS AND BALLADS

THE BURNING BABE

As I in hoary Winter's night stood shiveringe in the snowe,
Surpris'd I was with sodayne heat, which made my hart to glowe;
And liftinge upp a fearefull eye to vewe what fire was nere,
A prety Babe all burninge bright, did in the ayre appeare,
Who scorched with excessive heate, such floodes of teares did shedd,
As though His floodes should quench His flames which with His teares were fedd;
Alas! quoth He, but newly borne, in fiery heates I frye,
Yet none approach to warme their hartes or feele my fire but I!
My faultles brest the fornace is, the fuell woundinge thornes,
Love is the fire, and sighes the smoke, the ashes shame and scornes;
The fuell Justice layeth on, and Mercy blowes the coales,
The mettall in this fornace wrought are men's defiled soules,
For which, as nowe on fire I am, to worke them to their good,
So will I melt into a bath to washe them in My bloode:
With this He vanisht out of sight, and swiftly shroncke awaye,
And straight I callèd unto mynde that it was Christmas-daye.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

A HYMN OF THE NATIVITY

Sung by the Shepherds

Come, we shepherds whose blest sight
Hath met Love's noon in Nature's night;
Come, lift we up our loftier song,
And wake the sun that lies too long.

To all our world of well-stol'n joy
He slept, and dreamt of no such thing,
While we found out Heaven's fairer eye,
And kiss'd the cradle of our King;
Tell him he rises now too late
To show us aught worth looking at.

Tell him we now can show him more
  Than he e'er showed to mortal sight,
Than he himself e'er saw before,
  Which to be seen needs not his light:
Tell him, Tityrus, where th' hast been,
Tell him, Thyrsis, what thou hast seen.

TITYRUS

Gloomy night embraced the place
  Where the noble infant lay:
The babe look'd up, and show'd His face;
  In spite of darkness it was day.
It was Thy day, sweet, and did rise,
Not from the East, but from Thy eyes.
  CHORUS. It was Thy day, sweet, etc.

THYRSIS

Winter chid aloft, and sent
  The angry North to wage his wars:
The North forgot his fierce intent,
  And left perfumes instead of scars.
By those sweet eyes' persuasive powers,
Where he meant frosts he scatter'd flowers.
  CHORUS. By those sweet eyes, etc.

BOTH

We saw Thee in Thy balmy nest,
  Young dawn of our eternal day;
We saw thine eyes break from the East,
  And chase the trembling shades away:
We saw Thee, and we blest the sight,
We saw Thee by thine own sweet light.

TITYRUS

Poor world, said I, what wilt thou do
  To entertain this starry stranger?
Is this the best thou canst bestow—
  A cold and not too cleanly manger?

Contend, the powers of heaven and earth,
To fit a bed for this huge birth.
CHORUS. Contend, the powers, etc.

THYRSIS

Proud world, said I, cease your contest,
And let the mighty babe alone,
The phoenix builds the phoenix' nest,
Love's architecture is His own.
The babe, whose birth embraves this morn,
Made His own bed ere He was born.
CHORUS. The babe whose birth, etc.

TITYRUS

I saw the curl's drops, soft and slow,
Come hovering o'er the place's head,
Off'ring their whitest sheets of snow,
To furnish the fair infant's bed.
Forbear, said I, be not too bold,
Your fleece is white, but 'tis too cold.

THYRSIS

I saw th' obsequious seraphim
Their rosy fleece of fire bestow,
For well they now can spare their wings,
Since Heaven itself lies here below.
Well done, said I: but are you sure
Your down, so warm, will pass for pure?
CHORUS. Well done, said I, etc.

BOTH

No, no, your King's not yet to seek
Where to repose His royal head;
See, see how soon His new-bloom'd cheek
'Twixt mother's breasts is gone to bed.
Sweet choice, said we, no way but so,
Not to lie cold, yet sleep in snow!
CHORUS. Sweet choice, said we, etc.

FULL CHORUS

Welcome all wonders in one sight!
  Eternity shut in a span!
Summer in winter! day in night!

CHORUS

Heaven in earth! and God in man!
  Great little one, whose all-embracing birth
Lifts earth to Heaven, stoops Heaven to earth!

Welcome, tho' nor to gold, nor silk,
  To more than Caesar's birthright is:
Two sister seas of virgin's milk,
  With many a rarely-temper'd kiss,
That breathes at once both maid and mother,
Warms in the one, cools in the other.

She sings Thy tears asleep, and dips
  Her kisses in Thy weeping eye:
She spreads the red leaves of Thy lips
  That in their buds yet blushing lie.
She 'gainst those mother diamonds tries
The points of her young eagle's eyes.

Welcome—tho' not to those gay flies,
  Gilded i' th' beams of earthly kings,
Slippery souls in smiling eyes—
  But to poor shepherds, homespun things,
Whose wealth's their flocks, whose wit's to be
Well read in their simplicity.

Yet, when young April's husband show'rs
  Shall bless the fruitful Maia's bed,
We'll bring the first-born of her flowers,
  To kiss Thy feet, and crown Thy head.
To Thee, dread Lamb! whose love must keep
The shepherds while they feed their sheep.

To Thee, meek Majesty, soft King
  Of simple graces and sweet loves!
Each of us his lamb will bring,
  Each his pair of silver doves!
At last, in fire of Thy fair eyes,
Ourselves become our own best sacrifice!

RICHARD CRASHAW.

CHRISTMAS

All after pleasures as I rid one day,
  My horse and I, both tir'd, body and mind,
With full cry of affections, quite astray,
  I took up in the next inn I could find.

There when I came, whom found I but my dear,
  My dearest Lord, expecting till the grief
Of pleasures brought me to Him, ready there
  To be all passengers' most sweet relief.

O Thou Whose glorious yet contracted light,
  Wrapt in Night's mantle, stole into a manger,
Since my dark soul and brutish is Thy right,
  To man, of all beasts, be not Thou a stranger:

Furnish and deck my soul, that Thou mayst have
A better lodging than a rack or grave.

* * * * * * *

The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be?
  My God, no hymn for Thee?
My soul's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds
  Of thoughts and words and deeds:
The pasture is Thy Word; the streams Thy grace,
  Enriching all the place.

Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers
Out-sing the daylight hours;
Then we will chide the Sun for letting Night
Take up his place and right:
We sing one common Lord; wherefore he should
Himself the candle hold.

I will go searching till I find a sun
Shall stay till we have done;
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly
As frost-nipt suns look sadly:
Then we will sing, and shine all our own day,
And one another pay:

His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine,
Till ev'n His beams sing, and my music shine.

GEORGE HERBERT.

ON THE INFANCY OF OUR SAVIOUR

Hail, blessed virgin, full of heavenly grace,
Blest above all that sprang from human race;
Whose heav'n-saluted womb brought forth in one,
A blessed Saviour and a blessed Son;
O! what a ravishment 't had been to see
Thy little Saviour perking on thy knee!
To see Him nuzzle in thy virgin breast
His milk-white body all unclad, all undressed!
To see thy busy fingers clothe and wrap
His spraddling limbs in thy indulgent lap!
To see His desperate eyes, with childish grace
Smiling upon His smiling mother's face!
And when His forward strength began to bloom,
To see Him diddle up and down the room!
O, who would think so sweet a Babe as this,
Should e'er be slain by a false-hearted kiss!

Had I a rag, if sure Thy body wore it,
Pardon, sweet Babe, I think I should adore it.
Till then, O grant this boon (a boon far dearer),
The weed not being, I may adore the wearer.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

Being a Dialogue between Three Shepherds

Where is this blessed Babe
    That hath made
All the world so full of joy
    And expectation;
    That glorious Boy
    That crowns each nation
With a triumphant wreath of blessedness?

Where should He be but in the throng,
    And among
His angel ministers that sing
    And take wing
Just as may echo to His voice,
    And rejoice
When wing and tongue and all
May so procure their happiness?

But He hath other waiters now:
    A poor cow,
An ox and mule, stand and behold,
    And wonder
That a stable should enfold
    Him that can thunder.
CHORUS: O what a gracious God have we,
How good! how great! even as our misery.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

CHRIST'S NATIVITY

Awake, glad heart! get up and sing!
It is the birthday of thy King.
Awake! Awake!
The sun doth shake
Light from his locks, and all the way
Breathing perfumes, doth spice the day.

Awake! awake! hark how th' wood rings,
Winds whisper, and the busy springs
A concert make.
Awake! awake!
Man is their high priest, and should rise
To offer up the sacrifice.

I would I were some bird, or star,
Fluttering in woods, or lifted far
Above this inn
And road of sin;
Then either star or bird should be
Shining or singing still to Thee.

I would I had in my best part
Fit rooms for Thee! or that my heart
Were so clean as
Thy manger was!
But I am all filth, and obscene;
Yet, if Thou wilt, Thou can'st make me clean.

Sweet Jesu! will then. Let no more
This leper haunt and soil Thy door!
Cure him, ease him,
O release him!
And let once more, by mystic birth,
The Lord of life be born in earth.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

THE SHEPHERDS

Sweet, harmless livers! on whose holy leisure
  Waits innocence and pleasure;
Whose leaders to those pastures and clear springs
  Were patriarchs, saints and kings;
How happened it that in the dead of night
  You only saw true light,
While Palestine was fast asleep and lay
  Without one thought of day?
Was it because those first and blessed swains
  Were pilgrims on those plains
When they received the promise, for which now
  'Twas then first shown to you?

'Tis true He loves that dust whereon they go
  That serve Him here below,
And therefore might for memory of those
  His love there first disclose;
But wretched Salem, once His love, must now
  No voice nor vision know;
Here stately piles with all their height and pride
  Now languished and died,
And Bethlehem's humble cots above them stept
  While all her seers slept;
Her cedar fir, hewed stones, and gold were all
  Polluted through their fall;
And those once sacred mansions were now
  Mere emptiness and show.

This made the angel call at reeds and thatch,
  Yet where the shepherds watch,
And God's own lodging, though He could not lack,
  To be a common rack.
No costly pride, no soft-clothed luxury
  In those thin cells could lie;

Each stirring wind and storm blew through their cots,
  Which never harboured plots;
Only content and love and humble joys
  Lived there without all noise;
Perhaps some harmless cares for the next day
  Did in their bosoms play,
As where to lead their ship,[1] what silent nook,
  What springs or shades to look;
But that was all; and now with gladsome care
  They for the town prepare;
They leave their flock, and in a busy talk
  All towards Bethlem walk,
To seek their soul's great Shepherd who was come
  To bring all stragglers home;
Where now they find Him out, and, taught before,
  That Lamb of God adore,
That Lamb, whose days great kings and prophets wished
  And longed to see, but missed.
The first light they beheld was bright and gay,
  And turned their night to day;
But to this later light they saw in Him
  This day was dark and dim.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

AN HYMN ON THE NATIVITY OF MY SAVIOUR

I sing the birth was born to-night,
The author both of life and light;
The angels so did sound it.
And like the ravish'd shepherds said,
Who saw the light, and were afraid,
Yet search'd, and true they found it.

[1] Sheep.

The Son of God, the Eternal King,
That did us all salvation bring,
And freed the soul from danger;
He whom the whole world could not take,
The Word, which Heaven and Earth did make,
Was now laid in a manger.

The Father's wisdom will'd it so,
The Son's obedience knew no No,
Both wills were in one stature;
And as that wisdom had decreed,
The Word was now made Flesh indeed,
And took on him our nature.

What comfort by him do we win,
Who made himself the price of sin,
To make us heirs of glory!
To see this Babe, all innocence
A martyr born in our defence;
Can man forget this story?

BEN JONSON.

ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

It was the winter wild,
While the Heaven-born Child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe to Him,
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the Sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,

And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace:
She, crowned with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;
And, waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around:
The idle spear and shield were high up-hung;
The hookèd chariot stood,
Unstain'd with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armèd throng;
And kings sat still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of Light
His reign of peace upon the earth began:
The winds, with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kissed,
Whispering new joys to the mild Ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmèd wave.

The stars, with deep amaze,
Stand fix'd in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence,
And will not take their flight
For all the morning light,

Or Lucifer that often warn'd them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord Himself bespake, and bid them go.

And, though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
The Sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new enlightened world no more should need:
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or ere the point of dawn,
Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they then
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below;
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet,
As never was by mortal finger strook,
Divinely warbled voice
Answering the stringed noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loth to lose,
With thousand echoes still prolongs each heavenly close.

Nature, that heard such sound
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat the Airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling:
She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all Heaven and Earth in happier union.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shamefaced Night arrayed;
The helmèd Cherubim,
The swordèd Seraphim,
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings displayed,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born Heir.

Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the Sons of Morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced World on hinges hung,
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres!
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow;
And with your ninefold harmony
Make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

For, if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,
Time will run back and fetch the Age of Gold;
And speckled Vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
And leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould;
And Hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

Yea, Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,

Orbed in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace-hall.

But wisest Fate says No,
This must not yet be so;
The Babe yet lies in smiling infancy
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss,
So both himself and us to glorify:
Yet first, to those ychained in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep.

With such a horrid clang
As on Mount Sinai rang,
While the red fire and smouldering clouds outbrake:
The aged Earth, aghast
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the centre shake,
When, at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins; for from this happy day
The Old Dragon under ground,
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurpèd sway,
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

The Oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,

With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathèd spell,
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale
Edged with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns, and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power forgoes his wonted seat.

Peor and Baälim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-battered god of Palestine;
And moonèd Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine:
The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn;
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammuz mourn.

And sullen Moloch, fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue;
In vain with cymbals' ring
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue;
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshowered grass with lowings loud;
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest;
Nought but profoundest Hell can be his shroud;
In vain, with timbreled anthems dark,
The sable-stolèd sorcerers bear his worshiped ark.

He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand;
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;
Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide,
Not Typhon huge ending in snaky twine:
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damnèd crew.

So, when the sun in bed,
Curtained with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale
Troop to the infernal jail,
Each fettered ghost slips to his several grave,
And the yellow-skirted fays
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze.

But see! the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest.
Time is our tedious song should here have ending:
Heaven's youngest-teemèd star
Hath fixed her polished car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending;
And all about the courtly stable
Bright-harnessed Angels sit in order serviceable.

JOHN MILTON.

TO HIS SAVIOUR, A CHILD; A PRESENT, BY A CHILD

Go, pretty child, and bear this flower
Unto thy little Saviour;
And tell him, by that bud now blown,
He is the Rose of Sharon known.
When thou hast said so, stick it there
Upon his bib or stomacher;
And tell him, for good handsel too,
That thou hast brought a whistle new,
Made of a clean strait oaten reed,
To charm his cries at time of need.
Tell him, for coral thou hast none,
But if thou hadst, he should have one;
But poor thou art, and known to be
Even as moneyless as he.
Lastly, if thou canst win a kiss
From those mellifluous lips of his;
Then never take a second on,
To spoil the first impression.

R. HERRICK.

AN ODE OF THE BIRTH OF OUR SAVIOUR

In numbers, and but these few,
I sing thy birth, O JESU!
Thou pretty Baby, born here
With sup'rabundant scorn here,
Who for thy princely port here,
Hadst for thy place
Of birth a base
Out-stable for thy court here.

Instead of neat enclosures
Of interwoven osiers,
Instead of fragrant posies
Of daffodils and roses,
Thy cradle, Kingly Stranger,
As Gospel tells,
Was nothing else
But here a homely manger.

But we with silks, not crewels,
With sundry precious jewels,
And lily-work, will dress thee;
And as we dispossess thee
Of clouts, we'll make a chamber,
Sweet Babe, for thee
Of ivory,
And plastered round with amber.

The Jews they did disdain thee,
But we will entertain thee
With glories to await here
Upon thy princely state here,
And more for love than pity,
From year to year
We'll make thee here
A freeborn of our city.

R. HERRICK.

From "Hamlet"

MARCELLUS

Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long,
And then, they say, no spirit dare stir abroad.
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike,
No fairy takes nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

SHAKESPEARE.

In "Titus Andronicus" Shakespeare makes his only reference to the Mistletoe, thus:

TAMORA

. . . Had I not reason, think you, to look pale?
These two have tic'd me hither to this place,
A barren detested Vale you see it is;
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,
O'ercome with Moss, and baleful Mistletoe.

OLD SONG

Ivy hath a lybe; she laghtit with the cold,
So mot they all hafe that wyth Ivy hold.
Nay, Ivy! Nay, hyt, &c.

Holy hat berys as red as any Rose,
The foster the hunters, kepe hem from the doo.
Nay, Ivy! Nay, hyt, &c.

Ivy hath berys as black as any slo;
Ther com the oule and ete hym as she goo.
Nay, Ivy! Nay, hyt, &c.

Holy hath byrdys, aful fayre flok,
The Nyghtyngale, the Poppyngy, the gayntyl Lavyrok.
Nay, Ivy! Nay, hyt, &c.

Good Ivy! what byrdys ast thou!
Non but the howlet that kreye "How! How!"
Nay, Ivy! Nay, hyt shall not, &c.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Our countryman, Barnaby Googe, from the Latin of Naogeorgus, gives us some lines descriptive of the old festival:

Then comes the day wherein the Lorde
did bring his birth to passe;
Whereas at midnight up they rise,
and every man to Masse.
This time so holy counted is,
that divers earnestly
Do thinke the waters all to wine
are chaunged sodainly;
In that same houre that Christ himselfe
was borne, and came to light,
And unto water streight againe
transformde and altred quight.
There are beside that mindfully
the money still do watch.
That first to aultar commes, which then
they privily do snatch.
The priestes least each other should have it,
takes oft the same away,
Whereby they thinke throughout the yeare
to have good lucke in play.
And not to lose; then straight at game
till day-light do they strive,
To make some present proofe how well
their hallowde pence wil thrive.
Three Masses every prieste doth sing,
upon that solemn day,
With offrings unto every one,
that so the more may play.
This done, a woodden child in clowtes
is on the aultar set,
About the which both boyes and gyrles
do daunce and trymly jet,

And Carrols sing in prayse of Christ,
and, for to help them heare,
The ordans aunswere every verse
with sweete and solemne cheare.
The priestes doe rore aloud; and round
about the parantes stande,
To see the sport, and with their voyce
do help them and their hande.

CHRISTMAS

With footstep slow, in furry pall yclad,
His brows enwreathed with holly never sere
Old Christmas comes, to close the wained year;
And aye the shepherd's heart to make right glad;
Who, when his teeming flocks are homeward had,
To blazing hearth repairs, and nutbrown beer,
And views well pleased the ruddy prattlers dear
Hug the grey mungrel; meanwhile maid and lad
Squabble for roasted crabs. Thee, Sire, we hail
Whether thine aged limbs thou dost enshroud
In vest of snowy white and hoary veil,
Or wrap'st thy visage in a sable cloud;
Thee we proclaim with mirth and cheer, nor fail
To greet thee well with many a carol loud.

BAMFYLDE.

A GLOOMY MORNING BEFORE CHRISTMAS

It is methinks a morning full of fate!
It riseth slowly, as her sullen car
Had all the weights of sleep and death hung at it!
She is not rosy finger'd, but swoln black!

Her face is like a water turn'd to blood,
And her sick head is bound about with clouds
As if she threatened night ere noon of day.
It does not look as it would have a hail
Or health wished in it as of other morns.

JONSON.

Janus sit by the fuyr with double berd,
And drynketh of his bugle horn the wyn;
Biforn him stont the braun of toskid swyn,
And nowel crieth every lusty man.

CHAUCER.

CEREMONIES FOR CHRISTMAS

Come, bring with a noise,
My merry, merry boys,
The Christmas log to the firing,
While my good dame, she
Bids ye all be free,
And drink to your hearts' desiring.

With the last year's brand
Light the new block, and
For good success in his pending,
On your psalteries play,
That sweet luck may
Come while the log is a-teending.

Drink now the strong beer,
Cut the white loaf here,
The while the meat is a-shredding;
For the rare mince-pie,
And the plums stand by,
To fill the paste that's a-kneading.

R. HERRICK.

CHRISTMAS EVE, ANOTHER CEREMONY

Come, guard this night the Christmas-pie,
That the thief, though ne'er so sly,
With his flesh-hooks, don't come nigh
To catch it

From him who alone sits there,
Having his eyes still in his ear,
And a deal of nightly fear,
To watch it.

R. HERRICK.

THE WASSAIL

Give way, give way, ye gates, and win
An easy blessing to your bin
And basket by our entering in.

May both with manchet stand replete;
Your larders too so hung with meat
That, though a thousand thousand eat,

Yet, ere twelve moons shall whirl about
Their silvery spheres, there's none may doubt
But more's sent in than was served out.

Next may your dairies prosper so
As that your pans no ebb may know;
But if they do, the more to flow,

Like to a solemn sober stream,
Bank'd all with lilies and the cream
Of sweetest cowslips filling them.

Then may your plants be pressed with fruit,
Nor bee or hive you have be mute,
But sweetly sounding like a lute.

Next may your ducks and teeming hen
  Both to the cock's tread say Amen,
And for their two eggs render ten.

Last may your harrows, shares and ploughs,
  Your stacks, your stocks, your sweetest mows,
All prosper by your virgin vows.

Alas! we bless, but see none here
  That brings us either ale or beer:
In a dry house all things are near.

Let's leave a longer time to wait,
  When rust and cobwebs bind the gate
And all live here with needy Fate.

Where chimneys do forever weep
  For want of warmth, and stomachs keep
With noise the servants' eyes from sleep.

It is in vain to sing or stay
  Our free feet here; but we'll away:
Yet to the Lares this we'll say—

The time will come when you'll be sad
  And reckon this for fortune had,
T'have lost the good ye might have had.

ROBERT HERRICK.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

A gentleman being on Christmas Eve in a very solitary place, among very solemn company, where was but small cheer, less mirth, and least music, being very earnestly entreated to sing a Christmas Carol, with much ado sang as followeth:

Now Christmas draweth near, and most men make good cheer,
With heigh-ho, care away!
I, like a sickly mome,[1] in drowsy dumps at home,
Will naught but fast and pray.

Some sing and dance for life, some card and dice as rife,
Some use old Christmas games;
But I, oh wretched wight! in dole both day and night,
Must dwell; the world so frames.

In Court, what pretty toys, what fine and pleasant joys
To pass the time away!
In country naught but care; four cheese-curds, chiefest fare;
For wine, a bowl of whey.

For every dainty dish, of flesh or else of fish,
And for your drink in Court,
A dish of young fried frogs, sod houghs of mezled hogs,[2]
A cup of small tap-wort.

And for each courtly sight, each show that may delight
The eye or else the mind;
In country thorns and brakes, and many mirey lakes,
Is all the good you find.

And for fine enteries, halls, chambers, galleries,
And lodgings many moe;
Here desert woods and plains, where no delight remains,
To walk in to and fro.

[1] Mome—stupid, blockhead.

[2] 'Sod houghs of mezled hogs'—So-seething, boiled. Hough—Hock. Mezled—Measled, a disease in swine.

In Court, for to be short, for every pretty sport
That may the heart delight;
In country many a grief, and small or no relief,
To aid the wounded wight.

And in this desert place, I, wretch! in woful case,
This merry Christmas time,
Content myself perforce to rest my careful corse,
And so I end my rime.

NICHOLAS BRETON.

A CHRISTMAS SONG

In the latter end of Christmas the same gentleman was likewise desired to sing; and although against his will, was content to sing as followeth:

The Christmas now is past, and I have kept my fast,
With prayer every day;
And, like a country clown, with nodding up and down,
Have passed the time away.

As for old Christmas games, or dancing with fine dames,
Or shows or pretty plays;
A solemn oath I swear, I came not where they were,
Not all these holy-days.

I did not sing one note, except it were by rote,
Still buzzing like a bee;
To ease my heavy heart of some though little smart,
For want of other glee.

And as for pleasant wine, there was no drink so fine,
For to be tasted here;
Full simple was my fare, if that I should compare,
The same to Christmas Cheer.

I saw no kind of sight that might my mind delight,
Believe me, noble dame.
But everything I saw did fret at woe my maw,
To think upon the same.

A Christmas Song

Upon some bushy balk full fain I was to walk,
In woods, from tree to tree,
For want of better room; but since my fatal doom
Hath so appointed me;

I stood therewith content, the Christmas full was spent,
In hope that God will send
A better yet next year, my heavy heart to cheer;
And so I make an end.

NICHOLAS BRETON.

AN OLD SONG THAT USED TO BE SUNG AT CHRISTMAS IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

This can night, this can night,
Every night and awle;
Fire and Fleet, and Candle-light,
And Christ receive thy sawle.
When thou from hence dost pass away.
Every night and awle,
To Whinny-moor thou com'st at last,
And Christ receive thy sawle.

If ever thou gav'st either hosen or shune,
Every night and awle,
Sit thee down and put them on,
And Christ receive thy sawle.
But if hosen nor shune thou never gave nean,
Every night and awle,
The Whinnes shall prick thee to the bare bean,
And Christ receive thy sawle.

If ever thou gav'st either meat or drink,
Every night and awle.
The Fire shall never make thee shrink,
And Christ receive thy sawle.

But if meat and drink thou never gav'st nean
  Every night and awle.
The Fire shall burn thee to the bare bean,
  And Christ receive thy sawle.

CHRISTMAS CHEER

Good husband and housewife, now chiefly be glad
  Things handsome to have as they ought to be had,
They both do provide against Christmas do come,
  To welcome their neighbour, good cheer to have some;
Good bread and good drink, a good fire in the hall,
  Brown pudding and souse, and good mustard withal.
Beef, mutton and pork, shred pies of the best,
  Pig, veal, goose and capon and turkey well dressed,
Cheese, apples and nuts, jolly carols to hear,
  As then in the Country is counted good cheer.

What cost to good husband is any of this,
  Good household provision only it is;
Of others the like I do leave out a many,
  That costeth the husbandman never a penny.

THOMAS TUSSER.

CHRISTMAS

Get ivy and hull,[1] woman, deck up thine house,
And take this same brawn for to seethe and to souse;
Provide us good cheer, for thou knowest the old guise,
Old customs that good be, let no man despise.
At Christmas be merry and thank God of all,
And feast thy poor neighbours, the great and the small.
Yea, all the year long have an eye to the poor,
And God shall send luck to keep open thy door.

[1] Holly.

Good fruit and good plenty do well in thy loft,
Then lay for an orchard and cherish it oft.
The profit is mickle, the pleasure is much;
At pleasure with profit few wise men will grutch.
For plants and for stocks lay aforehand to cast,
But set or remove them, while Twelve-tide[1] do last.

THOMAS TUSSER.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

So, now is come our joyfullest feast;
  Let every man be jolly.
Each room with ivy leaves is dressed,
  And every post with holly.
Though some churls at our mirth repine,
Round your foreheads garlands twine;
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
  And let us all be merry.

Now all our neighbours' chimneys smoke,
  And Christmas blocks are burning;
Their ovens they with baked meats choke,
  And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let sorrow lie;
And if for cold it hap to die,
We'll bury't in a Christmas pie,
  And evermore be merry.

Now every lad is wondrous trim,
  And no man minds his labour;
Our lasses have provided them
  A bag-pipe and a tabor;
Young men and maids, and girls and boys,
Give life to one another's joys;
And you anon shall by their noise
  Perceive that they are merry.

[1] Christmas to Twelfth Night.

Rank misers now do sparing shun;
  Their hall of music soundeth;
And dogs thence with whole shoulders run,
  So all things there aboundeth.
The country folks themselves advance
With crowdy-muttons out of France;
And Jack shall pipe and Jyll shall dance,
  And all the town be merry.

Ned Squash hath fetcht his bands from pawn,
  And all his best apparel;
Brisk Nell hath bought a ruff of lawn
  With dropping of the barrel;
And those that hardly all the year
Had bread to eat, or rags to wear,
Will have both clothes and dainty fare,
  And all the day be merry.

Now poor men to the justices
  With capons make their errands;
And if they hap to fail of these,
  They plague them with their warrants;
But now they feed them with good cheer,
And what they want they take in beer;
For Christmas comes but once a year,
  And then they shall be merry.

Good farmers in the country nurse
  The poor, that else were undone;
Some landlords spend their money worse
  On lust and pride at London.
There the roysters they do play,
Drab and dice their lands away,
Which may be ours another day;
  And therefore let's be merry.

The client now his suit forbears,
  The prisoner's heart is eased;

The debtor drinks away his cares,
And for the time is pleased.
Though other's purses be more fat,
Why should we pine or grieve at that?
Hang sorrow! care will kill a cat,
And therefore let's be merry.

Hark! how the wags abroad do call
Each other forth to rambling;
Anon you'll see them in the hall
For nuts and apples scrambling.
Hark! how the roofs with laughter sound!
Anon they'll think the house goes round,
For they the cellar's depth have found,
And there they will be merry.

The wenches with their wassel-bowls
About the streets are singing;
The boys are come to catch the owls,
The wild mare in it bringing.
Our kitchen boy hath broke his box,
And to the dealing of the ox
Our honest neighbours come by flocks,
And here they will be merry.

Now kings and queens poor sheepcotes have,
And mate with every body;
The honest now may have the knave,
And wise men play the noddy.
Some youths will now a-mumming go,
Some others play at Rowland-bo,
And twenty other game boys mo,
Because they will be merry.

Then wherefore in these merry daies
Should we, I pray, be duller?
No, let us sing some roundelayes,
To make our mirth the fuller.

And while thus inspired we sing,
Let all the streets with echoes ring,
Woods and hills and everything,
Bear witness we are merry.

GEORGE WITHER.

BELLMAN'S VERSES (1707)

Go, happy shepherds, leave your flocks and hie,
To Bethlem, where your infant Lord doth lie;
And when you've viewed his sacred Person well
Spare not aloud what you have seen to tell.

Write volumes of these things, and let them bear
The title of the Shepherd's Calendar;
This I assure you never shepherds knew
With all their studies half as much as you.

THE GHOST SONG

'Tis late and cold, stir up the fire;
Sit close and draw the table nigher;
Be merry and drink wine that's old,
A hearty medecine 'gainst a cold.
Your beds of wanton down the best,
Where you shall tumble to your rest.
Call for the best the house may ring,
Sack, white, and claret let them bring,
And drink apace, whilst breath you have,
You'll find but cold drink in the grave;
Plover, partridge for your dinner,
And a capon for the sinner,
You shall find ready when you're up,
And your horse shall have his sup.
Welcome, welcome shall fly round,
And I shall smile, though underground.

17TH CENTURY.

OLD SONG

Now Christmas is come,
  Let us beat up the drum,
And call all our neighbours together,
  And when they appear,
Let us make them such cheer,
  As will keep out the wind and the weather.

SIGNS OF CHRISTMAS

When on the barn's thatched roof is seen
The moss in tufts of liveliest green;
When Roger to the wood-pile goes
And, as he turns, his fingers blows;
When all around is cold and drear,
Be sure that Christmas-tide is near.

When Tom at eve comes home from plough
And brings the mistletoe's green bough,
With milkwhite berries spotted o'er,
And shakes it the sly maid before,
Then hangs the trophy up on high,
Be sure that Christmas-tide is nigh.

When Hal, the woodman in his clogs
Brings home the huge unwieldy logs
That, hissing on the smouldering fire
Flame out at last a quiv'ring spire;
When in his hat the holly stands
Old Christmas musters up his bands.

When cluster'd round the fire at night
Old William talks of ghost and sprite;
And, as a distant outhouse gate
Slams in the wind, all fearful wait,
Expecting some old ghost of yore,
Then Christmas comes in at the door.

EDWIN LEES.

SONG IN HONOUR OF THE BOAR'S HEAD AT QUEEN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

I sing not of Rome or Grecian mad games,
The Pythian, Olympic and such like hard names;
Your patience awhile, with submission I beg,
I strive but to honour the feast of Coll. Reg.
Derry down, down, derry down.

No Thracian brawls at our rites are prevail,
We temper our mirth with plain, sober mild ale;
The tricks of old Circe deter us from wine,
Though we honour a boar we won't make ourselves swine.
Derry down, down, derry down.

Great Hilo was famous for slaying his oxe,
Yet he prov'd but an ass in the cleaving of blocks;
But we had a hero for all things was fit
Our motto displays both his valour and wit.
Derry down, down, derry down.

Stout Hercules labor'd and looked mighty big
When he slew the half starv'd Erymanthian pig;
But we can relate such a stratagem taken,
That the stoutest of boars may not save his own bacon.
Derry down, down, derry down.

So dreadful this bristle-back'd foe did appear,
You'd have sworn he had got the wrong pig by the ear,
But instead of avoiding the mouth of the beast,
He rammed in a volume and cried—Graecum est.
Derry down, down, derry down.

In this gallant action such fortitude shown is
As proves him no coward nor tender Adonis;
No armour but logic by which we may find
That logic's the bulwark of body and mind.
Derry down, down, derry down.

Song in Honour of the Boar's Head at Queen's College, Cambridge

Ye 'squires that fear neither hills nor rough rocks,
And think you're full wise when you outwit a fox,
Enrich your poor brains and expose them no more,
Learn Greek and seek glory from hunting the boar.
Derry down, down, derry down.

THE MAHOGANY TREE

Christmas is here;
Winds whistle shrill,
Icy and chill,
Little care we;
Weather without,
Sheltered about
The mahogany tree.

Once on the boughs
Birds of rare plume
Sang, in its bloom;
Night-birds are we;
Here we carouse,
Singing, like them,
Perched round the stem
Of the jolly old tree.

Here let us sport,
Boys, as we sit—
Laughter and wit
Flashing so free.
Life is but short—
When we are gone,
Let them sing on,
Round the old tree.
Pile up the coals;
Fill the red bowls,
Round the old tree!

Drain we the cup—
Friend, art afraid?
Spirits are laid
In the Red Sea.
Mantle it up;
Empty it yet;
Let us forget,
Round the old tree!

Evenings we knew,
Happy as this;
Faces we miss,
Pleasant to see.
Kind hearts and true,
Gentle and just,
Peace to your dust!
We sing round the tree.

Care, like a dun,
Lurks at the gate:
Let the dog wait;
Happy we'll be!
Drink, every one;
Sorrows, begone!
Life and its ills,
Duns and their bills,
Bid we to flee.
Come with the dawn,
Blue-devil sprite;
Leave us to-night,
Round the old tree!

W. M. Thackeray.

TO RICHARD HEBER

(At Christmas)

Heap on more wood! the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deemed the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer;
E'en, heathen yet, the savage Dane
At Iol more deep the mead did drain;
High on the beach his galleys drew,
And feasted all his pirate crew;
Then in his low and pine-built hall,
Where shields and axes decked the wall,
They gorged upon the half-dressed steer;
Caroused in seas of sable beer;
While round, in brutal jest, were thrown
The half-gnawed rib and marrow-bone;
Or listened all, in grim delight,
While scalds yelled out the joys of fight.
Then forth, in frenzy, would they hie,
While wildly-loose their red locks fly,
And dancing round the blazing pile,
They make such barbarous mirth the while,
As best might to the mind recall
The boist'rous joys of Odin's hall.
  And well our Christian sires of old
Loved, when the year its course had rolled,
And brought blithe Christmas back again,
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honour to the holy night;
On Christmas Eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas Eve the mass was sung;
That only night in all the year
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.

The damsel donned her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dressed with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry men go,
To gather in the mistletoe.
Then opened wide the baron's hall
To vassal, tenant, serf, and all;
Power laid his rod of rule aside,
And Ceremony doffed his pride.
The heir, with roses in his shoes,
That night might village partner choose;
The lord, underogating, share
The vulgar game of "post and pair."
All hailed, with uncontrolled delight,
And general voice, the happy night,
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.
The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall table's oaken face,
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.
Then was brought in the lusty brawn,
By old blue-coated serving-man;
Then the grim boar's head frowned on high.
Crested with bays and rosemary.
Well can the green-garbed ranger tell,
How, when, and where, the monster fell:
What dogs before his death he tore,
And all the baiting of the boar.
The wassail round, in good brown bowls,
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls.
There the huge sirloin reeked; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas-pie;
Nor failed old Scotland to produce,
At such high tide, her savoury goose.

Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roared with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.
Who lists may in their mumming see
Traces of ancient mystery;
White shirts supplied the masquerade,
And smutted cheeks the visors made;
But oh! what maskers richly dight
Can boast of bosoms half so light!
England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale:
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.
Still linger, in our Northern clime,
Some remnants of the good old time;
And still, within our valleys here,
We hold the kindred title dear,
Even when, perchance, its far-fetched claim
To Southern ear sounds empty name;
For course of blood, our proverbs deem,
Is warmer than the mountain-stream.
And thus my Christmas still I hold
Where my great grandsire came of old,
With amber beard, and flaxen hair,
And reverend apostolic air—
The feast and holy-tide to share,
And mix sobriety with wine,
And honest mirth with thoughts divine:
Small thought was his in after time
E'er to be hitched into a rhyme.
The simple sire could only boast,
That he was loyal to his cost;
The banished race of kings revered,

And lost his land—but kept his beard.
  In these dear halls, where welcome kind
Is with fair liberty combined;
Where cordial friendship gives the hand,
And flies constraint the magic wand
Of the fair dame that rules the land.
Little we heed the tempest drear,
While music, mirth, and social cheer,
Speed on their wings the passing year.
And Mertoun's halls are fair e'en now,
When not a leaf is on the bough.
Tweed loves them well, and turns again,
As loth to leave the sweet domain,
And holds his mirror to her face,
And clips her with a close embrace:
Gladly as he, we seek the dome,
And as reluctant turn us home.
  How just that, at this time of glee,
My thoughts should, Heber, turn to thee:
For many a merry hour we've known,
And heard the chimes of midnight's tone.
Cease, then, my friend! a moment cease,
And leave these classic tomes in peace!
Of Roman and of Grecian lore
Sure mortal brain can hold no more.
These ancients, as Noll Bluff might say,
"Were pretty fellows in their day;"
But time and tide o'er all prevail—
On Christmas eve a Christmas tale.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

WINTER

A wrinkled crabbèd man they picture thee,
Old Winter, with a rugged beard as grey
As the long moss upon the apple-tree;
Blue-lipt, an ice drop at thy sharp blue nose,
Close muffled up, and on thy dreary way
Plodding alone through sleet and drifting snows.
They should have drawn thee by the high-heapt hearth,
Old Winter! seated in thy great armed chair,
Watching the children at their Christmas mirth;
Or circled by them as thy lips declare
Some merry jest, or tale of murder dire,
Or troubled spirit that disturbs the night;
Pausing at times to rouse the smouldering fire,
Or taste the old October brown and bright.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

WREATHE THE BOWL

Wreathe the bowl
With flowers of soul,
The brightest wit can find us;
We'll take a flight
Towards heaven to-night,
And leave dull earth behind us!

Should Love amid
The wreaths be hid
That Joy, the enchanter, brings us,
No danger fear
While wine is near,
We'll drown him if he stings us.
Then wreathe the bowl
With flowers of soul,

The brightest wit can find us;
We'll take a flight
Towards heaven to-night,
And leave dull earth behind us.

'Twas nectar fed
Of old, 'tis said,
Their Junos, Joves, Apollos;
And man may brew
His nectar too,
The rich receipt's as follows:
Take wine like this,
Let looks of bliss
Around it well be blended;
Then bring wit's beam
To warm the stream,
And there's your nectar, splendid!
So, wreathe the bowl
With flowers of soul
The brightest wit can find us;
We'll take a flight
Towards heaven to-night,
And leave dull earth behind us!

Say, why did Time
His glass sublime
Fill up with sands unsightly,
When wine, he knew,
Runs brisker through,
And sparkles far more brightly?
Oh, lend it us,
And, smiling thus,
The glass in two we'll sever,
Make pleasure glide
In double tide,
And fill both ends for ever!

Then wreathe the bowl
With flowers of soul,
The brightest wit can find us;
We'll take a flight
Towards heaven to-night,
And leave dull earth behind us.

THOMAS MOORE.

CHRISTMAS

The minstrels played their Christmas tune
To-night beneath my cottage-eaves;
While smitten by a lofty moon,
The encircling laurels thick with leaves
Gave back a rich and dazzling sheen,
That overpowered their natural green.

Through hill and valley every breeze
Had sunk to rest with folded wings:
Keen was the air, but could not freeze
Nor check the music of the strings;
So stout and hardy were the band
That scraped the cords with strenuous hand.

And who but listened?—till was paid
Respect to every inmate's claim,
The greeting given, the music played
In honor of each household name,
Duly pronounced with lusty call,
And a merry Christmas wished to all.

W. WORDSWORTH.

CHRISTMAS BELLS

I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the south,
And with the sound
The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
And made forlorn
The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
"For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead: nor doth He sleep!"
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!

LONGFELLOW.

THE LAMB

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee,
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright,
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by his name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

WILLIAM BLAKE.

THE VIRGIN'S CRADLE HYMN

Sleep, sweet babe! my cares beguiling:
Mother sits beside thee smiling:
  Sleep, my darling, tenderly!
If thou sleep not, mother mourneth,
Singing as her wheel she turneth:
  Come, soft slumber, balmily!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

ROBIN HOOD

To a Friend

No! these days are gone away
And their hours are old and grey,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years:
Many times have winter's shears,
Frozen North, and chilling East,
Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men knew nor rent nor leases.

  No, the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the hill;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amazed to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

NOTE.—*The legendary Robin Hood died on Christmas Day.*

On the fairest time of June
You may go, with sun or moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you;
But you never may behold
Little John, or Robin bold;
Never one of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair hostess Merriment,
Down beside the pasture Trent;
For he left the merry tale
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone, the merry morris din;
Gone, the song of Gamelyn;
Gone, the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the "grenè shawe";
All are gone away and past!
And if Robin should be cast
Sudden from his turfèd grave,
And if Marian should have
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze:
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the dockyard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her—strange! that honey
Can't be got without hard money!

So it is: yet let us sing,
Honour to the old bow-string!
Honour to the bugle-horn!
Honour to the woods unshorn!
Honour to the Lincoln green!

Honour to the archer keen!
Honour to tight little John,
And the horse he rode upon!
Honour to bold Robin Hood,
Sleeping in the underwood!
Honour to Maid Marian,
And to all the Sherwood clan!
Though their days have hurried by
Let us two a burden try.

JOHN KEATS.

'TWAS MERRY IN THE HALL

Our ancient English melodies
  Are banish'd out of doors,
And nothing's heard in modern days
  But signoras and signors.
    Such airs I hate,
    Like a pig in a gate;
  Give me the good old strain,
    When 'twas merry in the hall,
    The beards wagg'd all,—
  We shall never see the like again!

On beds of down our dandies lay,
  And waste the cheerful morn,
While our squires of old would raise the day
  With the sound of the bugle horn;
    And their wives took care
    The feast to prepare,
  For when they left the plain,
    Oh! 'twas merry in the hall,
    The beards wagg'd all,—
  We shall never see the like again!

'Twas then the Christmas tale was told
Of goblin, ghost, or fairy,
And they cheer'd the hearts of the tenants old
With a cup of good canary.
And they each took a smack
Of the cold black-jack,
Till the fire burn'd in each brain;
Oh! 'twas merry in the hall,
The beards wagg'd all,—
May we soon see the like again!

THREE DAMSELS IN THE QUEEN'S CHAMBER

Three damsels in the queen's chamber,
The queen's mouth was most fair;
She spake a word of God's mother
As the combs went in her hair.
Mary that is of might,
Bring us to thy Son's sight.

They held the gold combs out from her,
A span's length off her head;
She sang this song of God's mother
And of her bearing-bed.
Mary most full of grace,
Bring us to thy Son's face.

When she sat at Joseph's hand,
She looked against her side;
And either way from the short silk band
Her girdle was all wried.
Mary that all good may,
Bring us to thy Son's way.

Three Damsels in the Queen's Chamber

Mary had three women for her bed,
  The twain were maidens clean;
The first of them had white and red,
  The third had riven green.
    Mary that is so sweet,
    Bring us to thy Son's feet.

She had three women for her hair,
  Two were gloved soft and shod;
The third had feet and fingers bare,
  She was the likest God.
    Mary that wieldeth land,
    Bring us to thy Son's hand.

She had three women for her ease,
  The twain were good women:
The first two were the two Maries,
  The third was Magdalen.
    Mary that perfect is,
    Bring us to thy Son's kiss.

Joseph had three workmen in his stall,
  To serve him well upon;
The first of them were Peter and Paul,
  The third of them was John.
    Mary, God's handmaiden,
    Bring us to thy Son's ken.

"If your child be none other man's,
  But if it be very mine,
The bedstead shall be gold two spans,
  The bed foot silver fine."
    Mary that made God mirth,
    Bring us to thy Son's birth.

"If the child be some other man's,
  And if it be none of mine,

The manger shall be straw two spans,
  Betwixen kine and kine."
    Mary that made sin cease,
    Bring us to thy Son's peace.

Christ was born upon this wise,
  It fell on such a night,
Neither with sounds of psalteries,
  Nor with fire for light.
    Mary that is God's spouse,
    Bring us to thy Son's house.

The star came out upon the east
  With a great sound and sweet:
Kings gave gold to make him feast
  And myrrh for him to eat.
    Mary, of thy sweet mood,
    Bring us to thy Son's good.

He had two handmaids at his head,
  One handmaid at his feet;
The twain of them were fair and red,
  The third one was right sweet.
    Mary that is most wise,
    Bring us to thy Son's eyes. Amen.

A. C. SWINBURNE.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Before the paling of the Stars,
  Before the winter morn,
Before the earliest cockcrow,
  Jesus Christ was born:
Born in a stable,
  Cradled in a manger,
In the world his hands had made,
  Born a stranger.

Priest and King lay fast asleep
In Jerusalem,
Young and old lay fast asleep
In crowded Bethlehem:
Saint and Angel, ox and ass,
Kept a watch together,
Before the Christmas daybreak
In the winter weather.

Jesus on his Mother's breast
In the stable cold,
Spotless Lamb of God was He,
Shepherd of the fold.
Let us kneel with Mary Maid,
With Joseph bent and hoary,
With Saint and Angel, ox and ass,
To hail the King of Glory.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

For my Godchildren

The Shepherds had an Angel,
The Wise Men had a Star,
But what have I, a little child,
To guide me home from far,
Where glad stars sing together,
And singing Angels are?—

Lord Jesus is my Guardian,
So I can nothing lack:
The lambs lie in His bosom
Along life's dangerous track:
The wilful lambs that go astray
He bleeding fetches back.

Lord Jesus is my guiding star,
  My beacon-light in heaven:
He leads me step by step along
  The path of Life uneven:
He, true light, leads me to that land
  Whose day shall be as seven.

Those Shepherds through the lonely night
  Sat watching by their sheep,
Until they saw the heavenly host
  Who neither tire nor sleep,
All singing "Glory glory"
  In festival they keep.

Christ watches me, His little lamb,
  Cares for me day and night,
That I may be His own in heaven:
  So angels clad in white
Shall sing their "Glory glory"
  For my sake in the height.

The Wise Men left their country
  To journey morn by morn,
With gold and frankincense and myrrh,
  Because the Lord was born:
God sent a star to guide them
  And sent a dream to warn.

My life is like their journey,
  Their star is like God's book;
I must be like those good Wise Men
  With heavenward heart and look:
But shall I give no gifts to God?—
  What precious gifts they took!

Lord, I will give my love to Thee,
  Than gold much costlier,

Sweeter to Thee than frankincense,
  More prized than choicest myrrh:
Lord, make me dearer day by day,
  Day by day holier;

Nearer and dearer day by day:
  Till I my voice unite,
And sing my "Glory glory"
  With angels clad in white;
All "Glory glory" given to Thee
  Through all the heavenly height.

CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand;
The wind was a nor'wester, blowing squally off the sea,
And the cliffs and spouting breakers were the only thing a-lee.

We heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day,
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.
We tumbled every hand on deck, instanter, with a shout,
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the South Head and the North;
All day we hauled the frozen sheets and got no further forth;
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature we tacked from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race roared;
But every tack we made we brought the North Head close aboard:
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers running high,
And the coast-guard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.

Christmas at Sea

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;
The good red fires were burning bright in every 'longshore home;
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed out,
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer,
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)
This day of our adversity was blessèd Christmas morn,
And the house above the coast-guard's was the house where I was born.

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair;
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves,
Go dancing round the china-plates that stand upon the shelves.

And well I know the talk they had, the talk that was of me,
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea;
And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of way,
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessèd Christmas day!

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.
"All hands to loose topgallant sails," I heard the captain call.
"By the Lord, she'll never stand it," our first mate, Jackson, cried.
"It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson," he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she understood.
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,
We cleared the weary headland and passed below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;
But all that I could think of in the darkness and the cold
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were growing old.

R. L. Stevenson.

CHRISTMAS VIOLETS

Last night I found the violets
  You sent me once across the sea;
From gardens that the winter frets
  In summer lands they came to me.

Still fragrant of the English earth,
  Still humid from the frozen dew,
To me they spoke of Christmas mirth,
  They spoke of England—spoke of you.

But you have reached a windless age,
  The haven of a happy clime;
You do not dread the winter's rage,
  Although we missed the summer time.

And like the flower's breath over sea,
  Across the gulf of time and pain,
To-night returns the memory
  Of castles that we built—in Spain!

ANDREW LANG.

EX ORE INFANTIUM

Little Jesus, wast thou shy
Once and just so small as I?
And what did it feel like to be
Out of Heaven, and just like me?

Didst Thou sometimes think of there,
And ask where all the angels were?
I should think that I would cry
For my house all made of sky;
I would look about the air,
And wonder where my angels were;
And at waking 'twould distress me—

Not an angel there to dress me!
Hadst Thou ever any toys,
Like us little girls and boys?
And didst Thou play in Heaven with all
The angels that were not too tall,
With stars for marbles? Did the things
Play *Can you see me?* through their wings?
And did Thy Mother let Thee spoil
Thy robes, with playing on our soil?
How nice to have them always new
In Heaven, because 'twas quite clean blue!

Didst Thou kneel at night to pray,
And didst Thou join Thy hands this way?
And did they tire sometimes, being young,
And make the prayer seem very long?
And dost Thou like it best that we
Should join our hands to pray to Thee?
I used to think before I knew,
The prayer not said unless we do.
And did Thy Mother at the night
Kiss Thee, and fold the clothes in right?
And didst Thou feel quite good in bed,
Kissed and sweet, and Thy prayers said?

Thou canst not have forgotten all
That it feels like to be small:
And Thou know'st I cannot pray
To Thee in my father's way—
When Thou wast so little, say,
Couldst Thou talk Thy Father's way?—

So, a little child, come down
And hear a child's tongue like Thy own;
Take me by the hand and walk,
And listen to my baby-talk,

To Thy Father show my prayer
(He will look, Thou art so fair)
And say: "O Father, I, Thy Son,
Bring the prayer of a little one."

And He will smile, that children's tongue,
Has not changed since Thou wast young!

FRANCIS THOMPSON.

JOSEPH AND MARY

JOSEPH

Mary, art thou the little maid
  Who plucked me flowers in Spring?
I know thee not: I feel afraid:
  Thou'rt strange this evening.

A sweet and rustic girl I won
  What time the woods were green;
No woman with deep eyes that shone,
  And the pale brows of a Queen.

MARY (*inattentive to his words*)

A stranger came with feet of flame
  And told me this strange thing,—
For all I was a village maid
  My son should be a King.

JOSEPH

A King, dear wife. Who ever knew
  Of kings in stables born!

MARY

Do you hear, in the dark and starlit blue
  The clarion and the horn?

JOSEPH

Mary, alas, lest grief and joy
  Have sent thy wits astray;
But let me look on this my boy,
  And take the wraps away.

MARY

Behold the lad.

JOSEPH

I dare not gaze:
  Light streams from every limb.

MARY

The winter sun has stored his rays,
  And passed the fire to him.

Look Eastward, Look! I hear a sound.
  O Joseph what do you see?

JOSEPH

The snow lies quiet on the ground
  And glistens on the tree;

The sky is bright with a star's great light,
  And clearly I behold
Three kings descending yonder hill,
  Whose crowns are crowns of gold.

O Mary, what do you hear and see
  With your brow toward the West?

MARY

The snow lies glistening on the tree
  And silent on Earth's breast;

And strong and tall, with lifted eyes
  Seven shepherds walk this way,
And angels breaking from the skies
  Dance and sing hymns, and pray.

JOSEPH

I wonder much at these bright Kings;
  The shepherds I despise.

MARY

You know not what a Shepherd sings,
  Nor see his shining eyes.

JAMES ELROY FLECKER.

THE OXEN

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
  "Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
  By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
  They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
  To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
  In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
  "Come; see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
  Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
  Hoping it might be so.

THOMAS HARDY.

THE CHRISTMAS ROSE

SCHNEEWITCHEN, WRAPPED IN WHITE SHEETS, WAS ASLEEP IN HER glassy coffin, and the cold, wicked step-mother ruled in the land. She is terrible in her fury, but when she has her good day, and lets her diamond crown shine benignantly in the sun, then mortals may venture to approach her ice-palace unmolested. She has innumerable castles, but the most beautiful one stands on the Hochgebirg, and there she prefers to hold her court. The primeval mountains stand like venerable court-marshalls, with stiff necks and powdered wigs, around the throne, on which the queen sits, and the nixies of the mountain lakes, like trembling waiting-maids, hold the crystal mirror before their exacting mistress. She looks at her snow-white face and says: "I am the most beautiful in all the land," and not one among the people of the court dares to dissent.

Others think and speak otherwise. The blue titmice, and the golden pheasants who, hungry and cold, hop through the snow-covered branches of the fir-trees, chirping low, tell about the king's son, who will waken the sleeping Schneewitchen with a kiss; the rude raven croaks disrespectfully about the wicked queen, and the gypsy tribe of sparrows give vent to their discontent in loud abuse. The little brown wren who creeps through the dry bushes like a mouse, sings a mocking song about the severe mistress. He has made a discovery in the forest path. On yonder slope, where the mid-day sun eats up the snow, there is already a sign of life. Last night the Christmas rose broke through the sparkling covering, and with bended head greets the rising sun.

Do you know the Christmas rose? In flat countries it never grows, but among the mountains it is known to every child. In some places it is the snow-rose, in others hellebore, and it is called the Christmas rose because it blooms about Yule-tide. Its open calyx, which is about as large as the hundred-leafed rose, is snow-white, sometimes overspread with a delicate red, like a mountain snow-field at sunset; and one unacquainted with the blossom's native soil would take it for the child of some far-off zone, so wonderfully beautiful it is. But the snow-rose has beside a virtue of its own, and whoever would know its origin must pay attention.

In a fruitful Alpine valley, through which a river fed with the milk of the glaciers rolled its foaming waters, there stood on a hill in ancient times a castle with a tower and encircling walls. Farther down on the river pious monks had

built a cloister, and between the castle and the monastery lay a farm. To-day the castle lies in ruins, the monastery still stands, and the farm has grown in the course of time to a market town.

It was near Christmas-time, many, many years ago, and it was even more lonely and silent in the valley than usual, for all who could carry sword and lance had gone with the count, to whom the castle and land belonged, across the mountains to Italy.

The farmer too, as one of the count's people, had been obliged to leave his home; and although he was always ready for battle, yet this time his going away was very hard, for he had to leave behind him a blooming young wife and a little three-year-old girl.

The Christmas festival was at hand. In the hall of the farmhouse the hearth-fire was crackling, and busy maids in linen aprons were mixing and kneading the dough for the holiday sweetcakes. Frau Walpurga, the mistress of the household, was not present. She was sitting with her heart heavy with anxiety by the bed of her child who was restlessly tossing about her little head burning with fever. On the opposite side of the sick-bed stood a monk with a shining bald crown and gray beard. It was Father Celestin from the monastery, a pious man, experienced in the art of healing. He scrutinized the sick child, shook his head, and began to mix a drink from the medicines he had brought with him.

Heavy footsteps were heard outside in the hall, and an old man, wearing a mantle of coarse material, entered the sick-room; in his left hand he held a broad-brimmed hat, and in his right, a lamb carved out of wood. The man was the shepherd of the farm. He looked darkly at the monk, then stepped up to the little bed, and held the lamb before the child. He had made two coal-black eyes for it with pine soot, and with the juice of berries, a red mouth; but the child did not notice the plaything. The mother sighed, and the shepherd left the room as quietly as he could. The monk gave the healing drink to the child, spoke some words of comfort, and went out. Mother and child were alone.

The physician's remedy seemed to do good to the feverish little girl. She fell into a deep sleep, and slept all day. But as the sun was going down, the child grew restless again; her forehead burned like fire, and she spoke incoherent words. All of a sudden the little one lifted herself from her pillow and said: "See, mother, see the beautiful lady and all the little children, and the lady

gives me roses, white roses!" Then she fell back again, and closed her eyes. But Frau Walpurga knelt down, sobbing softly.—"The child has seen the angels of heaven; she must die."

The mother did not long give way to her distress. She hastened to the door, and called the servants to send a messenger for Father Celestin. But both men-servants and maids had all gone to the monastery church to hear the Christmas service. Only one old lame woman had been left behind to tend the hearth-fire. Frau Walpurga commanded her to put out the fire, and stay by the child. She wrapped her cloak about her, left the house, and went in all haste to the monastery.

The sun had already set: only the mountain tops still gleamed a ruddy gold; in the valley the twilight had spread her gray garment of mist over the snow-fields. No living creature was to be seen, except two rooks flying towards the forest, slowly flapping their wings. In the far distance a light flickered through the mist; it came from the lighted windows of the monastery church; and the mother, with her heart full of anguish, hastened over the creaking snow in the direction of the light.

Suddenly her feet stopped, and her breath failed her. Out of the forest came a long procession of misty forms, led by a beautiful, tall, serious lady, in a broad, full cloak, and behind her tripped a crowd of little children with pale faces, clad in white.

The trembling mother concealed herself behind the trunk of a tree, and let the procession pass by. At the very end came a child who could hardly follow the others, for she was constantly stepping on her dress, which dragged on the ground. Then Frau Walpurga forgot her distress, and overcame her dread. She stepped toward the child, and tucked up her little frock so that she could keep pace with the other children.

And the beautiful pale lady turned her face toward the helper, smiled at her, and pointed with her forefinger to the ground at her feet.

At this moment the sound of monastery bells trembled through the air, the procession disappeared like mist scattered by the wind, and Frau Walpurga stood in the twilight alone on the snow-covered plain.

With timid steps she approached the spot to which the woman had pointed, and her heart leaped for joy. Out of the ice-covered earth was growing a bush, bearing green leaves and white roses.

"Those are the roses my child saw in her dream!" exclaimed Frau Wal-

purga; then she plucked three of the blossoms, and hurried as fast as she could go back to the farmhouse.

Besides the maid she found the old shepherd by the sick-bed. He had little regard for the skill of the monks, and therefore he himself had made a drink out of goat's gall and juniper berries, and had given it to the little sick girl.

Frau Walpurga stepped up to the bed, laid the three roses on the spread, and watched the child with anxious expectation. She seized the flowers with her little, trembling hands, held them to her face, and sneezed loud and strong.

"God bless her!" cried mother, shepherd, and maid. Then the child asked for a drink, turned her head on one side, and fell asleep.

"Now the fever is broken," said the shepherd. "My drink and the sneeze have saved the child. But where did you get those roses, Frau?"

Frau Walpurga quietly told the old man what had happened to her.

"That was none other than Frau Berchta with the cricket folk," explained the shepherd. "She wanders about every evening from Christmas till Twelfth Night, and my father has seen them too. Formerly she dwelt up in the Frauenstein, but when the monks built their house of stone she departed, and only shows herself during the twelve nights after Christmas, and blesses the land. It was lucky for you, Frau Walpurga, that you helped the cricket. Frau Berchta is a gentle lady, and rewards every service that has been rendered her." And then the old shepherd told what he knew about Frau Berchta, and he would have talked on till the cocks crowed, if Frau Walpurga had not brought him out of the sick-room with friendly words.

Once more she was sitting alone by her child's bed. The little one held the three roses in her closed hand, and she breathed peacefully and easily. Only once she murmured in her sleep, when the sound of the organ and the monks' song of praise, *Gloria in Excelsis,* were heard from the monastery. And the mother knelt down and was long at prayer.

When Father Celestin came the next day to see the sick child she was sitting up in bed, playing with the lamb which the shepherd had carved for her.

"Frau Walpurga," said the delighted physician, "the fever has disappeared. But it was a costly drink that I prepared for the child. I hope you will show your gratitude to the monastery."

But Frau Walpurga drew the monk aside and told him confidentially what had befallen her on Christmas Eve.

The Father knit his brow. "You were dreaming," he said, "or else the snow blinded your eyes. Take good care that none of your idle talk comes to the ears of our abbot; it might cost you a heavy penance." But when Frau Walpurga showed him the marvellous roses, the like of which the botanical doctor had never seen before, he grew thoughtful, and he finally said:—

"Woman, you have been highly favoured. You have with your bodily eyes beheld the Queen of Heaven and the blessed angels in her company. Our Dear Lady it was who gave you the three roses, the mother of our Lord, and not the dreadful sorceress, whose name no Christian may bring to his lips. Be assured of that, woman. And now listen to me further. The Madonna above the side-altar in our church is in need of a new robe as well as a crown. Show your gratitude to the mother of God, and provide her with new apparel. Will you promise me that?"

And Frau Walpurga, frightened by the monk's warning, said, "Yes, it shall be as you wish."

Thereupon she had a side of bacon, two fat geese, a pot of lard, and a bottle of red wine placed in a basket, and ordered a maid to take it and follow after Father Celestin to the monastery. And Father Celestin, with a smirk, blessed mother and child, servants and house, and went away, followed by the panting maid. But the old shepherd muttered to himself, "There again, one carries away the thanks which belong to another"; and by "another" he meant himself.

Frau Walpurga thought the same, but she said nothing. She gave the shepherd a handsome present; and the Madonna in the monastery received a silver crown and a new robe, on which lace and spangles were not used sparingly.

But the flower which grew up in the footprints of the heavenly queen—or was it, after all, Frau Berchta?—bore seeds and multiplied in the land, and according to trustworthy witnesses has in later times worked many a miracle.

HANS ANDERSEN'S CHRISTMAS BLESSING

"WHEN THE CHRISTMAS TREE IS LIGHTED—WHEN, AS PEOPLE SAY, THE WHITE BEES SWARM—I SHALL BE, GOD WILLING, AGAIN IN DENMARK WITH MY DEAR ONES, MY HEART FILLED WITH THE FLOWERS OF TRAVEL, AND STRENGTHENED BOTH IN BODY AND MIND; THEN WILL NEW WORKS GROW UPON PAPER; MAY GOD LAY HIS BLESSING UPON THEM. HE WILL DO SO. A STAR OF GOOD FORTUNE SHINES UPON ME; THERE ARE THOUSANDS WHO DESERVE IT FAR MORE THAN I. BUT SHOULD IT SET, PERHAPS WHILE I CONCLUDE THESE LINES, STILL IT HAS SHONE, I HAVE RECEIVED MY RICH PORTION; LET IT SET. FROM THIS ALSO THE BEST WILL SPRING. TO GOD, AND MEN, MY THANKS, MY LOVE."

CAROLS

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

CHORUS

What sweeter music can we bring,
Than a carol, for to sing
The birth of this our heavenly King?
Awake the voice! Awake the string!
Heark, ear, and eye, and everything,
Awake! the while the active finger
Runs divisions with the singer.

(*From the flourish they come to the song.*)

Dark and dull night, fly hence away,
And give the honour to this day,
That sees December turn'd to May.
If we may ask the reason, say
The why and wherefore all things here
Seem like the springtime of the year?
Why does the chilling winter's morn
Smile like a field beset with corn?
Or smell like to a mead new-shorn,
Thus on the sudden? Come and see
The cause why things thus fragrant be:
'Tis He is born whose quickening birth
Gives life and lustre public mirth
To heaven and the under-earth.

CHORUS

We see Him come, and know Him ours,
Who with His sunshine and His showers
Turns all the patient ground to flowers.

The Darling of the world is come,
And fit it is we find a room
To welcome Him. The nobler part
Of all the house here, is the heart.

CHORUS

Which we will give Him; and bequeath
This holly and this ivy wreath,
To do Him honour who's our King,
The Lord of all this revelling.

ROBERT HERRICK.

COME, LOVE WE GOD

Shaun MS.

(CHRISTMAS: EPIPHANY)

Come, love we God! of might is most
The Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost,
Regnante jam in aethera;
The which made man, both more and less,
And create him to his likéness,
O quanta sunt haec opera.

The herdmen came with their off'ring
For to présent that pretty thing
Cum summa reverentia.
They gave their gifts that child until;
They were received with full goodwill;
Quam grata sunt haec munera!

Three Kingès came from the east country,
Which knew they by astronomy,
Et Balam vaticinia;
They offered him gold, myrrh, incense;
He took them with great diligence:
Quam digna est infantia!

They turned again full merrily,
Each came unto his own country:
O Dei mirabilia,
They had heaven's bliss at their ending,
The which God grant us old and young.
Deo Patri sit gloria.

From The Oxford Book of Carols.

WONDER TIDINGS

(NATIVITY)

15th Century: School of J. Dunstable.

COMPANY

What tidings bringest thou, messenger,
Of Christès birth this jolly day?

A babe is born of high natúre,
The Prince of peace that ever shall be;
Of heaven and earth he hath the cure
His lordship is eternity:
Such wonder tidings ye may hear,
That man is made now Goddès peer,
Whom sin had made but fiendès prey.

A wonder thing is now befall;
That King that formèd star and sun,
Heaven and earth and angels all,
Now in mankind is new begun:
Such wonder tidings ye may hear,
An infant now of but one year,
That hath been ever and shall be ay.

That seemeth strange to us to see,
This bird that hath this babe yborn
And Lord conceived of high degree
A maiden is, as was beforn:
Such wonder tidings ye may hear,
That maiden and mother is one in fere,
And she a lady of great array.

That loveliest gan greet her child,
"Hail, son! Hail, brother! Hail, father dear!'
"Hail, daughter! Hail, sister! Hail, mother mild!"
This hailing was on quaint mannere:
Such wonder tidings ye may hear,
That hailing was of so good cheer
That mannés pain is turned to play.

From The Oxford Book of Carols.

SIR CHRISTMAS

(CHRISTMAS: SECULAR)

C. 1500

SIR CHRISTMAS

Nowell, nowell, nowell, nowell.

COMPANY

Who is there that singeth so, *nowell, nowell, nowell?*

SIR CHRISTMAS

I am here, Sir Christèmas.

COMPANY

Welcome, my lord Sir Christèmas.

SIR CHRISTMAS

Welcome to ye all, both more and less,

COMPANY

Come near, *nowell.*

SIR CHRISTMAS

Dieu vous garde, beaux sieurs, tidings I you bring:
A maid hath borne a child full young,
The which causeth you for to sing,

COMPANY

Nowell.

SIR CHRISTMAS

Christ is now born of a pure maid.
In an ox-stall he is laid,
Wherefore sing we all at a brayde,

COMPANY

Nowell.

SIR CHRISTMAS

Buvez bien par toute la compagnie,
Make good cheer and be right merry,
And sing with us now joyfully,

COMPANY

Nowell.

From The Oxford Book of Carols.

DOWN IN YON FOREST

Traditional.

Down in yon forest there stands a hall:
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:
It's covered all over with purple and pall:
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.

2. In that hall there stands a bed:
It's covered all over with scarlet so red:

3. At the bed-side there lies a stone:
Which the sweet Virgin Mary knelt upon:

4. Under that bed there runs a flood:
The one half runs water, the other runs blood:

5. At the bed's foot there grows a thorn:
Which ever blows blossom since he was born:

6. Over that bed the moon shines bright:
Denoting our Saviour was born this night:

From The Oxford Book of Carols.

COVENTRY CAROL

Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors 15th Century.

(CHRISTMAS : INNOCENTS)

Lully, lulla, thou little tiny child,
By by, lully lullay.

O sisters too,
How may we do
For to preserve this day
This poor youngling,
For whom we do sing,
By by, lully lullay?

Herod, the king,
In his raging,
Chargèd he hath this day
His men of might,
In his own sight,
All young childrén to slay.

That woe is me,
Poor child, for thee!
And ever morn and day,
For thy parting,
Neither say nor sing
By by, lully lullay!

From The Oxford Book of Carols.

A CAROL OF HUNTING

As I came by a green forest-side
I met with a forester that bade me abide,
With "Hey go bet[1], hey go bet, hey go howe!"
Underneath a tree I did me set,
And with a great hart anon I met.

[1] Better or beat? "Hey go bet" is a hunting cry.

I bad let slip, and said, "Hey go bet!"
With "Hey go bet, hey go bet, howe!"
I had not stood there but a while,
For the maintenance of a mile,
There came a great hart, without guile:
"There he goeth, there he goeth, hey go howe!
We shall have game and sport ynow."
Talbot my hound with a merry taste
All about the green wood he gan cast.
I took my horn and blew him a blast,
With "Tro-ro-ro-ro, tro-ro-ro-ro!"
With "Hey go bet, hey go bet, hey go howe!
There he goeth, there he goeth, hey go howe!
We shall have sport and game ynow!"

WYNKYN DE WORDE.

WASSAIL SONG

Here we come a-wassailing
  Among the leaves so green,
Here we come a-wandering,
  So fair to be seen:

Love and joy come to you,
And to you your wassail too,
And God bless you, and send you
A happy new year.

Our wassail cup is made
  Of the rosemary tree,
And so is your beer
  Of the best barley:

We are not daily beggars
  That beg from door to door,
But we are neighbours' children
  Whom you have seen before:

Wassail Song

Call up the butler of this house,
  Put on his golden ring;
Let him bring us up a glass of beer,
  And better we shall sing:

We have got a little purse
  Of stretching leather skin;
We want a little of your money
  To line it well within:

Bring us out a table,
  And spread it with a cloth;
Bring us out a mouldy cheese,
  And some of your Christmas loaf:

God bless the master of this house,
  Likewise the mistress too;
And all the little children
  That round the table go:

Good Master and good Mistress,
  While you're sitting by the fire,
Pray think of us poor children
  Who are wandering in the mire:

ANGLO-NORMAN CAROL

Seignors ore entendez a nus,
De loinz sumes venuz a wous,
    Pur quere Noel;
Car lem nus dut que en cest hostel
Soleit tenir sa feste anuel
    Ahi cest iur.
      Deu doint a tuz icels joie d'amurs
      Qi a Danz Noel ferunt honors.

NOTE.—*This early Anglo-Norman carol has been taken from a MS. in the British Museum.*

Seignors io vus di por veir
Ke Danz Noel ne uelt aveir.
Si joie non;
E repleni sa maison,
De payn, de char, & de peison,
Por faire honor.
Deu doint a tuz ces joie damur.

Seignors il est crie en lost,
Qu cil qui despent bien & tost,
E largement;
E fet les granz honors sovent
Deu li duble quanque il despent
Por faire honor
Deu doint a.

Seignors escriez les malveis,
Car vus nel les troverez jameis
De bone part:
Botun, batun, ferun groinard,
Car tot dis a le quer cuuard
Por faire honor,
Deu doint.

Noel beyt bein li vin Engleis
E li Gascoin & li Franceys
E l'Angeuin.
Noel fair beivre son veisin,
Si quil se dort, le chief en clin,
Sovent le ior,
Deu doint, tuz cels.

Seignors io vus di par Noel,
E par li sires de cest hostel,
Car beuez ben:
E io primes beurai le men,
E pois apres chescon le soen,
Par mon conseil,
Si io vus di trestoz Wesseyl
Dehaiz eit qui ne dirra Drincgeyl.

THE JOLLY SHEPHERD

Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

The shepherd upon a hill he sat,
He had on him his tabard[1] and his hat,
His tar-box, his pipe and his flagat;[2]
His name was called jolly, jolly Wat;
For he was a good herd's boy,
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

The shepherd upon a hill was laid,
His dog to his girdle was tied;
He had not slept but a little braid,[3]
But "*Gloria in excelsis*" was to him said.
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

The shepherd on a hill he stood,
Round about him his sheep they yode;[4]
He put his hand under his hood,
He saw a star as red as blood.
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

"Now farewell Mall and also Will,
For my love, go ye all still
Unto I come again you till,
And evermore, Will, ring well thy bell."

[1] Coat. [2] Bottle. [3] Time. [4] Went.

Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

"Now must I go where Christ was born;
Farewell! I come again to-morn.
Dog, keep well my sheep from the corn,
And warn well Warrock when I blow my horn."
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

When Wat to Bethlehem comë was,
He sweat; he had gone faster than a pace;
He found Jesus in a simple place,
Between an ox and an ass.
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

The shepherd said anon right:
"I will go see yon ferly sight,
Whereas the angel singeth on height,
And the star that shineth so bright."
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

"Jesu! I offer to Thee here my pipe,
My scrip, my tar-box, and my skirt;
Home to my fellows now will I skip,
And also look unto my sheep."

Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

"Now farewell, my own herdsman Wat!"
"Yea, for God, Lady, even so I hight;
Lull well Jesu in thy lap,
And farewell, Joseph, with thy round cape!"
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

"Now may I well both hope and sing,
For I have been at Christ's bearing;
Home to my fellows now will I fling;
Christ of heaven to His bliss us bring!
Ut hoy!
For in his pipe he made so much joy.
Can I not sing but hoy,
When the jolly shepherd made so much joy.

SWEET WAS THE SONG

Sweet was the song the Virgin sang,
When she to Bethlem Juda came,
And was delivered of a Son,
That blessed Jesus hath to name.
Lulla, lulla, lulla, lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lulla, lullaby, sweet Babe, sang she.
My Son and eke a Saviour born,
Who hast vouchsafed from on high
To visit us that were forlorn;
Lalula, lalula, lalulaby, sweet Babe, sang she,
And rockt Him sweetly on her knee.

From William Ballet's "Lute Book."

AS I SAT UNDER A SYCAMORE TREE

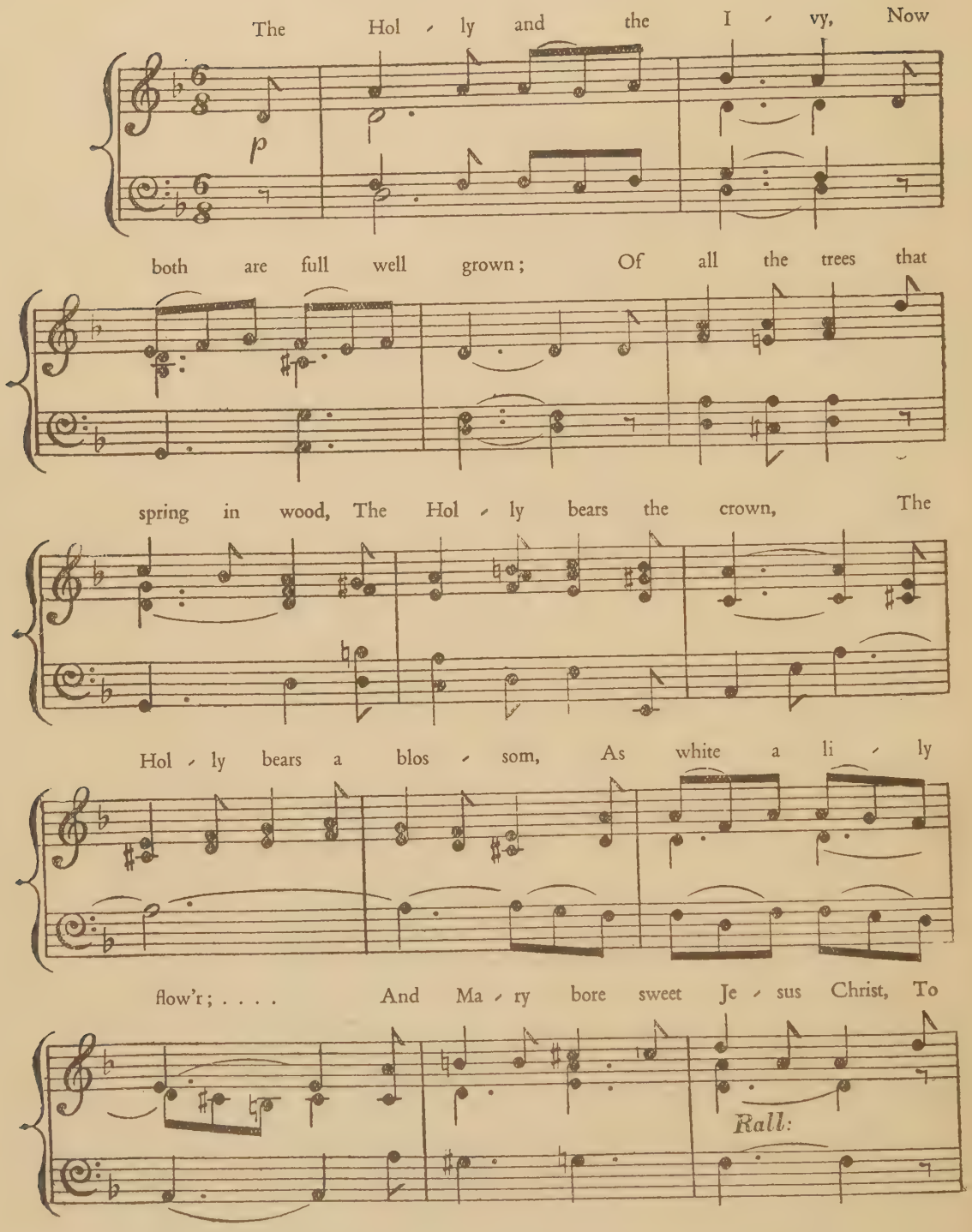
As I sat under a sycamore tree, a sycamore tree, a sycamore tree,
I looked me out upon the sea,
A Christmas day in the morning.

I saw three ships a-sailing there, a-sailing there, a-sailing there,
The Virgin Mary and Christ they bare,
A Christmas day in the morning.

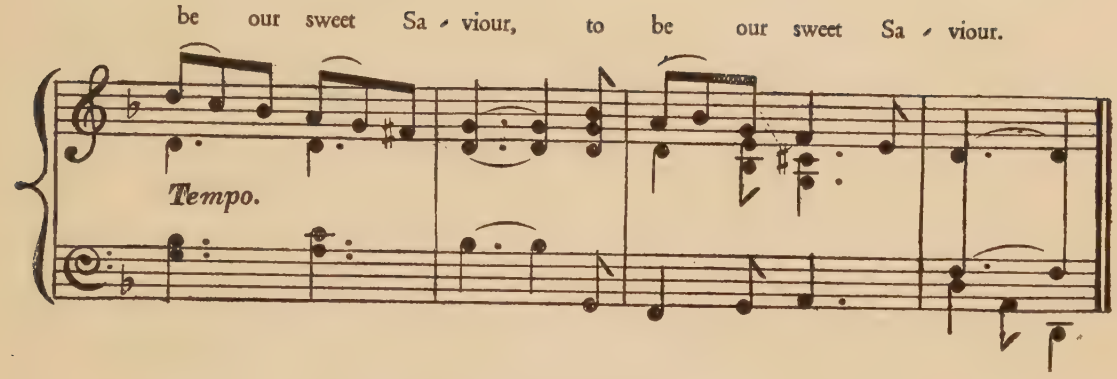
He did whistle, and she did sing, she did sing, she did sing,
And all the bells on earth did ring,
A Christmas day in the morning.

And now we hope to taste your cheer, taste your cheer, taste your cheer,
And wish you all a Happy New Year,
A Christmas day in the morning.

THE HOLLY AND THE IVY


The Hol - ly and the I - vy, Now
p
both are full well grown; Of all the trees that
spring in wood, The Hol - ly bears the crown, The
Hol - ly bears a blos - som, As white a li - ly
flow'r; . . . . And Ma - ry bore sweet Je - sus Christ, To
Rall:

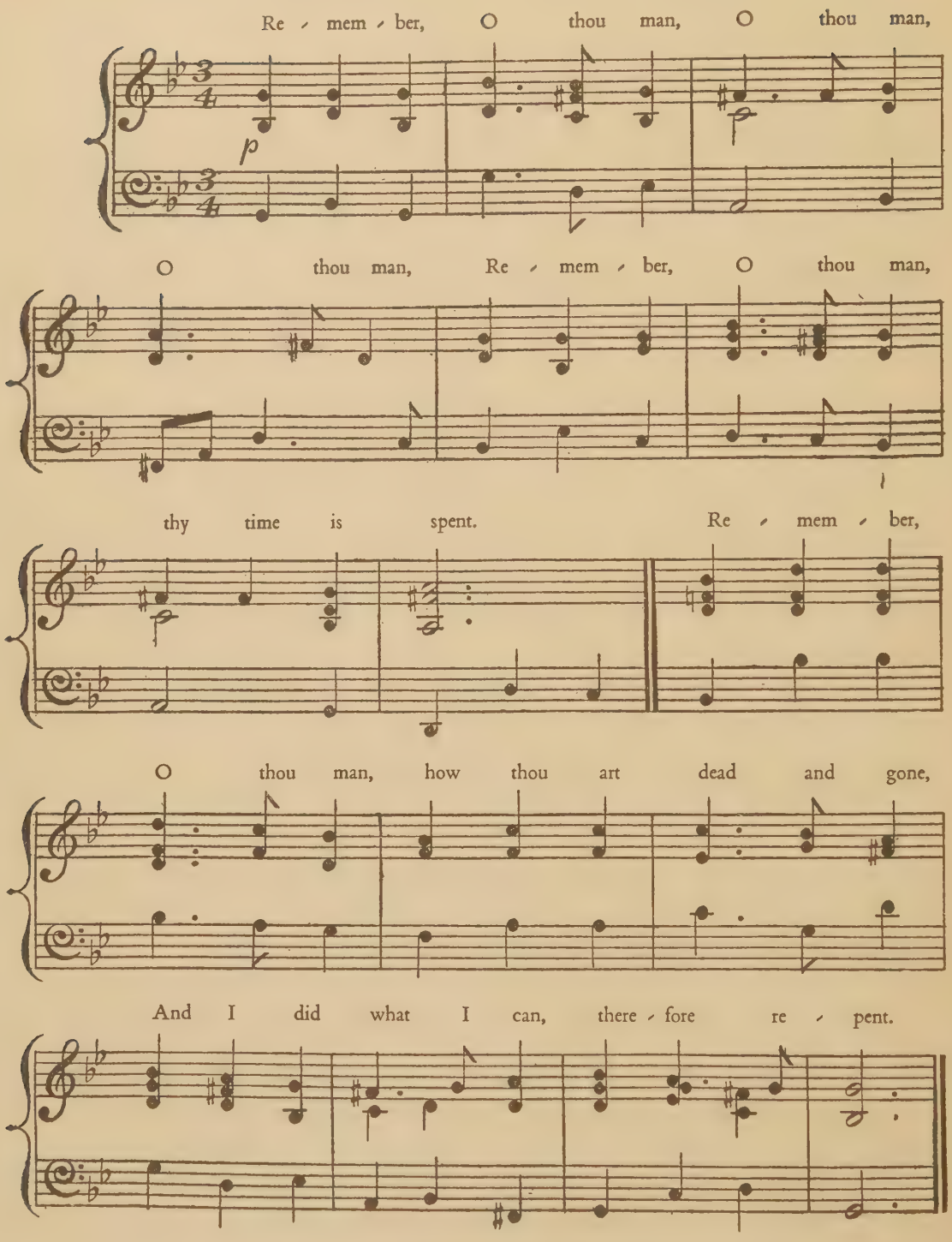
The Holly and the Ivy



The Holly bears a berry,
As red as any blood;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
To do poor sinners good.
The Holly bears a prickle,
As sharp as any thorn;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
On Christmas day in the morn.
On Christmas, etc.

The Holly bears a bark,
As bitter as any gall;
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
For to redeem us all.
The Holly and the Ivy,
Now both are full well grown;
Of all the trees that spring in wood,
The Holly bears the crown.
The Holly bears, etc.

REMEMBER, O THOU MAN


Re - mem - ber, O thou man, O thou man,
p
O thou man, Re - mem - ber, O thou man,
thy time is spent. Re - mem - ber,
O thou man, how thou art dead and gone,
And I did what I can, there - fore re - pent.

The angels all did sing, O thou man, etc.,
  The angels all did sing on shepherd's hill;
The angels all did sing praise to our heav'nly king,
  And peace to man living, with a good will.

The shepherds 'mazed were, O thou man, etc.,
  The shepherds 'mazed were, to hear the angels sing;
The shepherds 'mazed were, how it should come to pass
  That Christ, our Messias, should be our king.

To Bethlem they did go, O thou man, etc.,
  To Bethlem they did go, the shepherds three;
To Bethlem they did go, to see wh'er it were so,
  Whether Christ were born or no, to set man free.

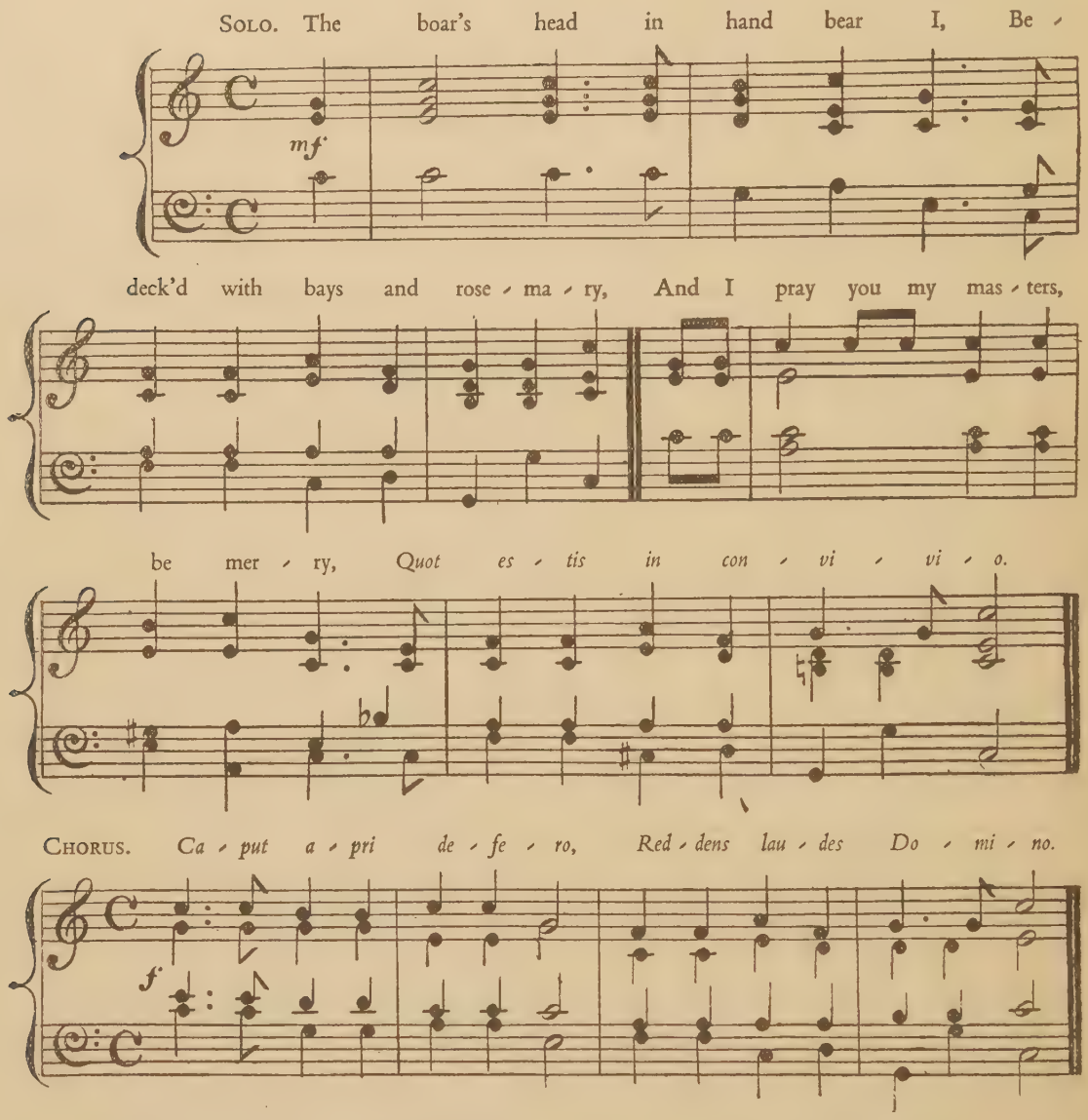
As the angels did say, O thou man, etc.,
  As the angels did say, so 't came to pass;
As the angels did say, they found a babe to lie,
  In manger wrapt in hay, so poor he was.

In Bethlem he was born, O thou man, etc.,
  In Bethlem he was born, for mankind's sake;
In Bethlem he was born, for us that were forlorn,
  And therefore took no scorn our flesh to take.

Give thanks to God always, O thou man, etc.,
  Give thanks to God always, most joyfully;
Give thanks to God always, for this our happy day
  Let all men sing and say, Holy, holy.

THE CAROL OF THE BOAR'S HEAD

16th Century.


Solo. The boar's head in hand bear I, Be -
mf
deck'd with bays and rose - ma - ry, And I pray you my mas - ters,
be mer - ry, Quot es - tis in con - vi - vi - o.
Chorus. Ca - put a - pri de - fe - ro, Red - dens lau - des Do - mi - no.
f

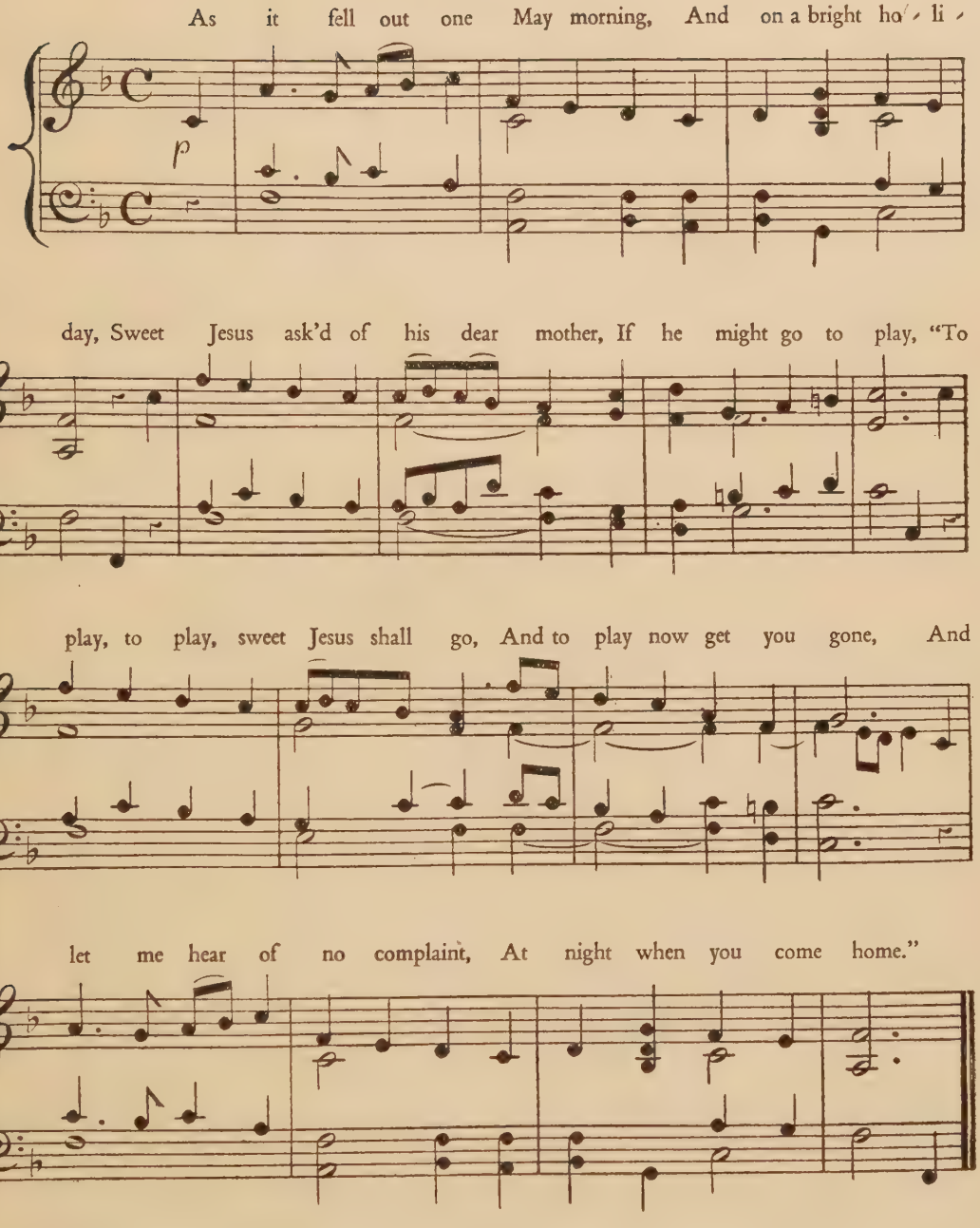
SOLO. The boar's head as I understand,
Is the bravest in all the land;
When thus bedeck'd with a gay garland,
Let us *servire cantico.*
CHORUS. *Caput apri,* &c.

SOLO. Our steward hath provided this
In honour of the king of Bliss;
Which on this day to be served is
In regimensi atrio.
CHORUS. *Caput apri,* &c.

This fine old Carol possesses historical interest, as being still sung annually, on Christmas Day, at Queen's College, Oxford.

THE HOLY WELL

Traditional (Derbyshire)


As it fell out one May morning, And on a bright ho - li -
p
day, Sweet Jesus ask'd of his dear mother, If he might go to play, "To
play, to play, sweet Jesus shall go, And to play now get you gone, And
let me hear of no complaint, At night when you come home."

Sweet Jesus went down to yonder town,
As far as the Holy Well,
And there did see as fine children
As any tongue can tell.
He said, "God bless you ev'ry one,
May Christ your portion be;
Little Children shall I play with you?
And you shall play with me."

But they made answer to him, "No,"
They were lords' and ladies' sons;
And he the meanest of them all,
Was born in an ox's stall.
Sweet Jesus turned him around,
And he neither laugh'd nor smil'd,
But the tears came trickling from his eyes
Like water from the skies.

Sweet Jesus turned him about,
To his mother's dear home went he,
And said, "I've been in yonder town,
As after you may see.
"I have been in yonder town,
As far as the Holy Well;
There did I meet as fine children
As any tongue can tell.

"I bid God bless them ev'ry one,
And Christ their bodies see;
Little children shall I play with you?
And you shall play with me.
"But then they answer'd me, 'No,'
They were lords' and ladies' sons;
And I the meanest of them all,
Was born in an ox's stall."

Though you are but a maiden's child,
Born in an ox's stall,

Thou art the Christ, the king of Heav'n,
And the Saviour of them all.
"Sweet Jesus, go down to yonder town,
As far as the Holy Well,
And take away those sinful souls,
And dip them deep in hell."

"Nay, nay," sweet Jesus mildly said,
"Nay, nay, that must not be,
For there are too many sinful souls
Crying out for the help of me."
O then bespoke the angel Gabriel,
Upon our good St. Stephen,
Although you're but a maiden's child,
You are the King of Heaven.

SAINT STEPHEN WAS A CLERK

Saint Stephen was a clerk in King Herod's hall,
And served him of bread and cloth, as ever king befall.

Stephen out of kitchen came with boar's head in [his] hand,
He saw a star [that] was fair and bright over Bethlehem stand.

He cast adown the boar's head and went into the hall:
"I forsake thee, King Herod, and thy workës all."

"I forsake thee, King Herod, and thy workës all;
There is a child in Bethlehem born is better than we all."

"What aileth thee, Stephen, what is thee befall?
Lacketh thee either meat or drink in King Herod's hall?"

"Lacketh me neither meat nor drink in King Herod's hall,
There is a child in Bethlehem born is better than we all."

Saint Stephen was a Clerk

"What aileth thee, Stephen, art thou mad, or thou ginnest to brede?[1]
Lacketh thee either gold or fee or any richë weed?"

"Lacketh me neither gold nor fee, nor no richë weed,
There is a child in Bethlehem born shall help us at our need."

"That is all so sooth, Stephen, all so sooth ywis,
As this capon crow [it] shall that lieth here in my dish."

That word was not so soonë said, that word in that hall,
The capon crew, *Christus natus est*, among the lordës all.

"Riseth up my tormentors, by twos and all by one,
And leadeth Stephen out of this town, and stoneth him with stone."

Took [they then] Stephen and stoned him in the way,
Therefore is his even on Christës own day.

WELCOME YULE

Welcome, Yule, thou merry man, in worship of this holy day,
Welcome be Thou, heaven's King,
Welcome, born in one morning,
Welcome, for whom we shall sing,
Welcome Yule.

Welcome be ye, Stephen and John,
Welcome, Innocents every one,
Welcome Thomas, martyred one,
Welcome Yule.

Welcome be ye, good New Year,
Welcome Twelfth Day, both in fere,
Welcome saints [both] lief and dear,
Welcome Yule.

[1] Rave.

Welcome be ye, Candlemas,
Welcome be ye, Queen of Bliss,
Welcome both to more and less,
Welcome Yule.

Welcome be ye that are here,
Welcome all and make good cheer,
Welcome all another year,
Welcome Yule.

BRING US IN GOOD ALE

Bring us in good ale, and bring us in good ale;
For our Blessed Lady's sake, bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no brown bread, for that is made of bran,
Nor bring us in no white bread, for therein is no game;
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no beef, for there is many bones,
But bring us in good ale, for that goes down at once;
And bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no bacon, for that is passing fat,
But bring us in good ale, and give us enough of that;
And bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no mutton, for that is often lean,
Nor bring us in no tripes, for they be seldom clean;
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no eggs, for there are many shells,
But bring us in good ale, and give us nothing else;
And bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no butter, for therein are many hairs;
Nor bring us in no pig's flesh, for that will make us boars;
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no puddings, for therein is all God's good;
Nor bring us in no venison, for that is not for our blood;
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no capon's flesh, for that is often dear;
Nor bring us in no duck's flesh, for they slobber in the mere;
But bring us in good ale.

WITH MERRY GLEE AND SOLACE

With merry glee and solace
This second day of Christmas
Now comes in bravely to my master's house,
Where plenty of good cheer I see,
With that which most contenteth me,
As brawn and bacon, powdered beef and sauce.

For the love of Stephen,
That blessed saint of heaven,
Which stonëd was for Jesus Christ his sake,
Let us all both more and less
Cast away all heaviness,
And in a sober manner merry make.

He was a man beloved,
And his faith approved
By suffering death [up]on this holy day,
Where he with gentle patience,
And a constant sufferance,
Hath taught us all to heaven the ready way.

So let our mirth be civil,
That not one thought of evil
May take possession of our hearts at all,
So shall we love and favour get
Of them that kindly thus do set
Their bounties here so freely in this hall.

Of delicates so dainty,
I see here is plenty
  Upon this table ready here prepared;
    Then let us now give thanks to those
    That all things friendly thus bestows,
  Esteeming not this world that is so hard.

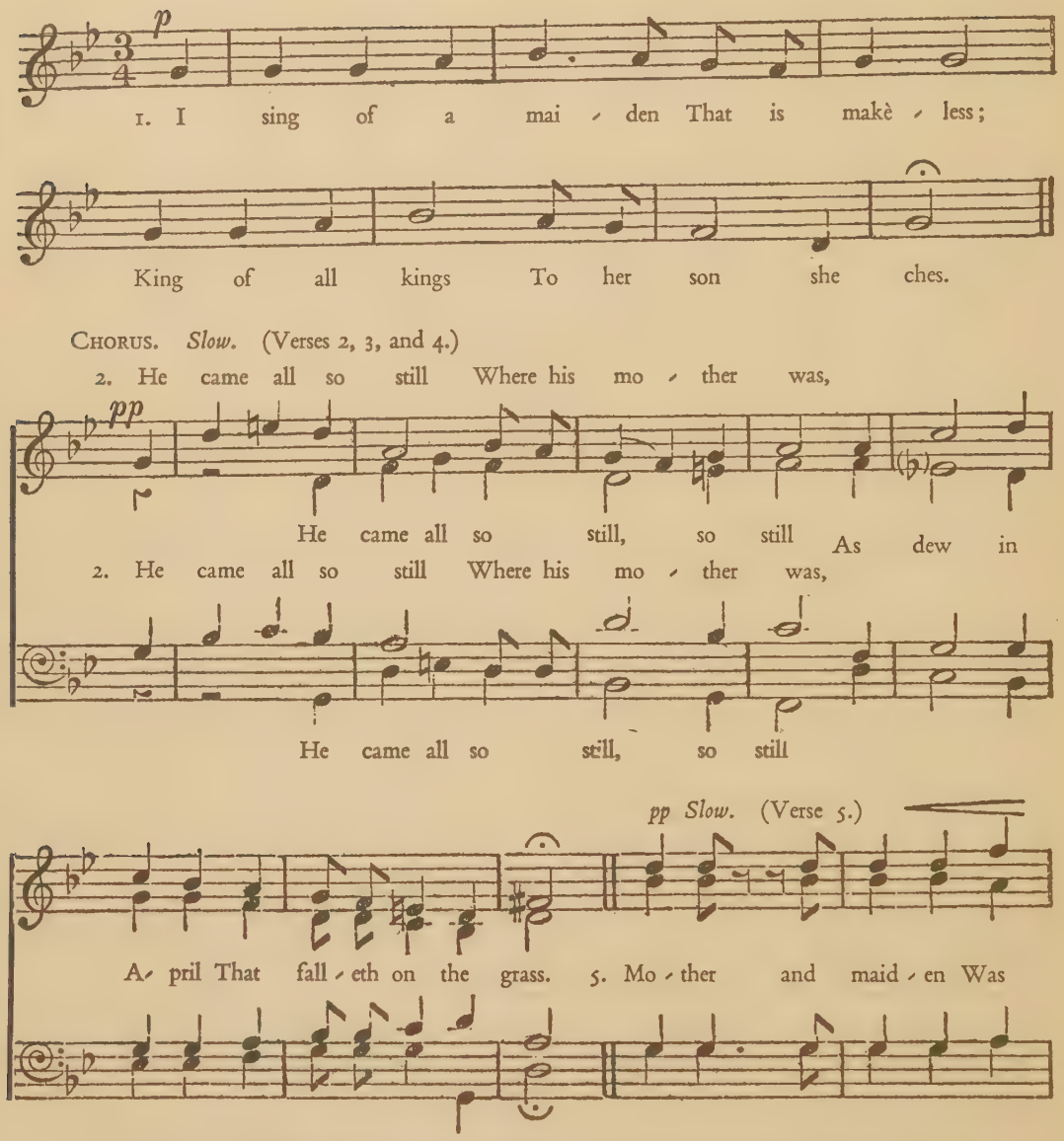
For of the same my master
Hath made me here a taster;
  The Lord above requite him for the same!
    And so to all within this house
    I will drink a full carouse,
  With leave of my good master and my dame.

And, the Lord be praised,
My stomach is well eased,
  My bones at quiet may go take their rest;
    Good fortune surely followed me
    To bring me thus so luckily
  To eat and drink so freely of the best.

I SING OF A MAIDEN

(GENERAL, MEDIEVAL)

SOLO VOICE. *Rather slowly* MARTIN SHAW. *15th Century*


p
1. I sing of a mai - den That is makè - less;
King of all kings To her son she ches.
CHORUS. Slow. (Verses 2, 3, and 4.)
2. He came all so still Where his mo - ther was,
pp
He came all so still, so still As dew in
2. He came all so still Where his mo - ther was,
He came all so still, so still
pp Slow. (Verse 5.)
A- pril That fall - eth on the grass. 5. Mo - ther and maid - en Was

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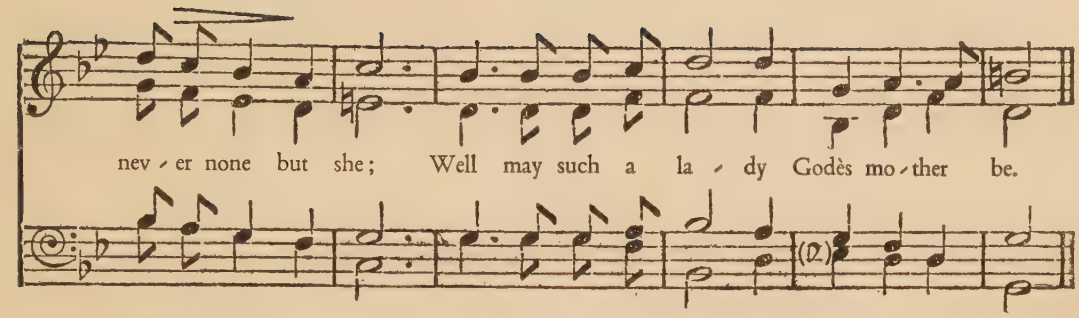


I sing of a maiden
That is makèless;
King of all kings
To her son she ches.

He came all so still
Where his mother was,
As dew in April
That falleth on the grass.

He came all so still
To his mother's bowr,
As dew in April
That falleth on the flower.

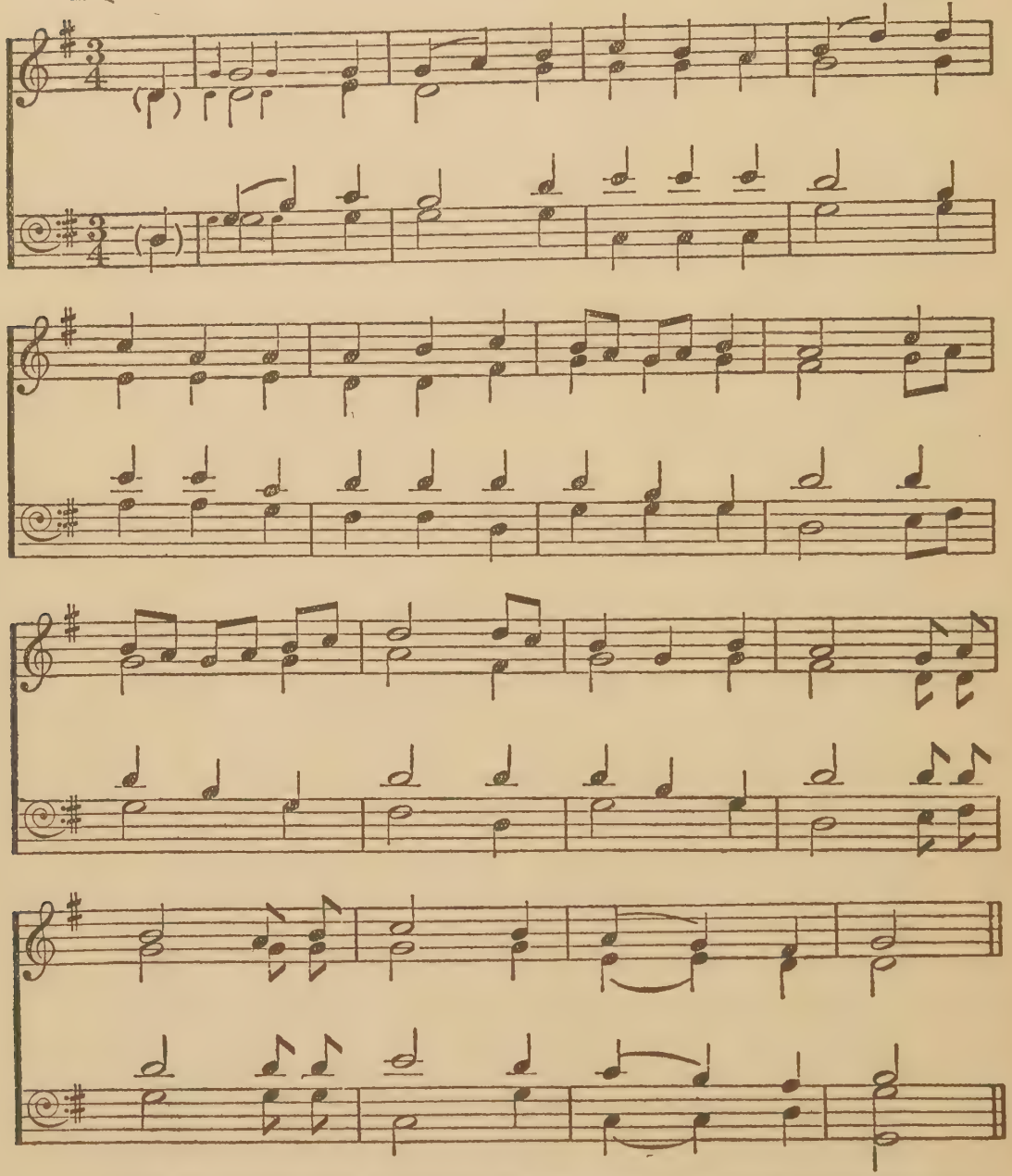
He came all so still
Where his mother lay,
As dew in April
That falleth on the spray.

Mother and maiden
Was never none but she;
Well may such a lady
Godes mother be.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE WASSAIL

(CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR, SECULAR)

In Quick Time. (R. V. W.)



From the Oxford Book of Carols: By permission of the Oxford University Press.

Wassail, Wassail, all over the town!
Our toast it is white, and our ale it is brown,
Our bowl it is made of the white maple tree;
With the wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.

So here is to Cherry and to his right cheek,
Pray God send our master a good piece of beef,
And a good piece of beef that may we all see;
With the wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.

And here is to Dobbin and to his right eye,
Pray God send our master a good Christmas pie,
And a good Christmas pie that may we all see;
With our wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.

So here is to Broad May and to her broad horn,
May God send our master a good crop of corn,
And a good crop of corn that may we all see;
With the wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.

And here is to Fillpail and to her left ear,
Pray God send our master a happy New Year,
And a happy New Year as e'er he did see;
With our wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.

And here is to Colly, and to her long tail,
Pray God send our master he never may fail
A bowl of strong beer; I pray you draw near,
And our jolly wassail it's then you shall hear.

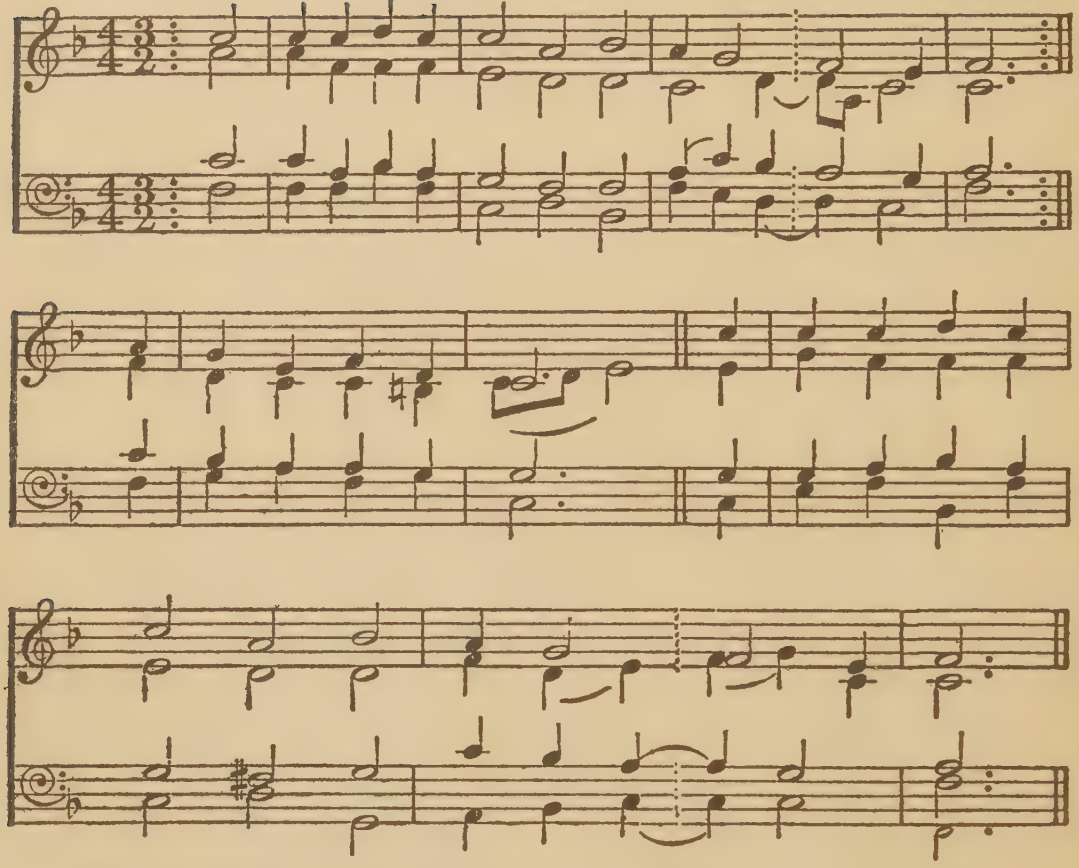
Come, butler, come fill us a bowl of the best,
Then we hope that your soul in heaven may rest;
But if you do draw us a bowl of the small,
Then down shall go butler, bowl and all.

Then here's to the maid in the lily white smock,
Who tripped to the door and slipped back the lock!
Who tripped to the door and pulled back the pin,
For to let these jolly wassailers in.

ES IST EIN' ROS'

(CHRISTMAS)

In moderate time *Arrranged by* MICHAEL PRAETORIUS



The barring of this tune is necessarily irregular. But its performance will be found to be easy if it is remembered that the time-value of a crotchet is the same throughout.

Es ist ein' Ros' entsprungen
Aus einer Wurzel zart,
Als uns die Alten sungen:
Aus Jesse kam die Art;
Und hat ein Blümlein bracht,
Mitten im kalten Winter,
Wohl zu der halben Nacht.

Das Röslein, das ich meine,
Davon Jesaias sagt,
Ist Maria die reine,
Die uns dies Blümlein bracht;
Aus Gottes ew'gem Rat
Hat sie ein Kindlein g'boren,
Ist blieb'n eint reine Magd.

Wir bitten dich von Herzen,
Maria, Rose zart,
Durch dieses Blümlein's Schmerzen,
Die er empfunden hat,
Wollst uns behülflich sein,
Dass wir ihm mögen machen
Ein Wohnung hubsch und fein!

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PART TWO

DECEMBER

THE BELLS

All that has mercy
  all that pities
share in the heavenly
  "nunc dimittis."

For all that has failed
  that cried "de profundis"
"balm," chaunt the bells
  "in the heart where the wound is."

The saint as the sinner—
  let that one and this come—
for all that is human
  the "pax vobiscum."

"Pax vobiscum"—the
  floral peace
of lemon blossom,
  and orange trees.

For the wicked who turns
  from his sin, no less
for the good man turning
  from saintliness,

For all that confesses
  "It has not sufficed"
the absolution of
  Jesus Christ.

HUMBERT WOLFE.

A PRETTY BABE

IN ALL THE SOUTHERN COUNTRYSIDE NO FARMER TOOK MORE CARE OF his beautiful flock than did Mr. Oliver. The flock consisted of pure-bred Dorset ewes, and Mr. Oliver gave these his greatest thought and attention and always took care to employ a shepherd who was a master at his trade.

At Dodderdown Mr. Oliver was considered to be a hard man, though he was by no means one who expected to reap where he had not sown, but any shepherd who was found neglecting the flock he at once dismissed from his employment.

Though Mr. Oliver was called hard, he was just and honourable and, if a servant obeyed his directions and was true to his trust, the farmer would be sure to remember him at the end of the year, for no one was more generous towards the deserving, and no man who did his best for this master ever regretted his labour. Mr. Oliver owned Norman Grange at Dodderdown. He lived sternly himself, his life was exemplary, his honesty and the taking heed to his ways had brought him good fortune.

Mr. Oliver was no pryer into other people's affairs, and so long as his men, and especially the shepherd, performed their duties in the work-a-day hours, he cared not if the cups at "The Soldier's Return" were filled quick or slow. But, though that was the case, the Dodderdown Inn had deprived him of more than one good shepherd, for it had often tempted an otherwise trustworthy man to desert the flock in the daytime, and being discovered there by his master, he had been forthwith sent about his business. Thus, now and again, because of the Inn, the farmer had changed his shepherd.

When Mr. Oliver hired Shepherd Poose in place of John Sparkes, whom he had discovered asleep at the Inn and neglecting the sheep, he was pleased with his choice. George Poose was no dullard. He was an expert shepherd and his knowledge of his craft, though a little old-fashioned perhaps, was more sound and steady than Mr. Oliver had hoped or expected from any uneducated countryman. Shepherd Poose had left his last place because his master had left off trading and sold out of business.

Mr. Oliver soon found that Shepherd Poose was just the man for his flock. He was gentle with the sheep—he called them not his master's but his own—and his dog, Jim, was as gifted and as clever as he.

The shepherd's cottage was in the same lane as the Inn. The cottage was

old and very pleasant to view, and did a poet, with the true pastoral love in his heart, pass by, he could not but recall to mind, when he saw at Evensong the shepherd's crook upon the wall—

"So minutes, hours, days, months and years,
Pass'd over to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs into a quiet grave."

Wherever the man was—and Mr. Oliver was well aware of this—with such a shepherd as Poose, his crook could never lie. When in the field, the crook would be in the shepherd's hand, or if he were making a new fold or taking his homely curds in the hut, the crook would be hanging upon the hut door, as a sign that the shepherd was there.

Inside the field hut, as if to show how many hours bring about the day, Mr. Poose had drawn a clock to which he had fastened cardboard hands, and as he noted each passing hour by his own trusty timepiece, he would move the hands to that hour and so would see before him how the day sped.

The last serious accident that had happened to the sheep occurred when John Sparkes slept all one Spring afternoon, forgetting his charge in his cups. It was then that the flock broke pasture and found their way into a field of rich, succulent clover, so that ten of them were gorged and died. Mr. Oliver was by no means the kind of man to dismiss a shepherd without any warning. He informed Poose, when he hired him, that if he allowed the flock unthinkingly to fall into trouble, or deserted them during lambing, that day would end their covenant,—there would be no forgiveness.

Mr. Oliver's famous sheep were a horned breed and lambed in December, so that about Christmas Day lambing was in full swing, and that day was usually the most busy in all the year to Mr. Oliver's shepherd. It often happens that December is a very wet month, and it certainly proved itself to be so during Mr. Poose's first year at Dodderdown.

"'Is clothes baint never dry," good Mrs. Poose was heard to say sadly, "for all they waters that do come down from sky do fall upon 'e's back."

Hardly a day passed when a fierce storm of rain was not falling, and had such a time of wet come when John Sparkes was shepherd, Mr. Oliver's losses would indeed have been heavy. But with Poose it was another matter, for he hardly left the sheep for one moment. He sheltered the fold with woven straw hurdles, and saw to it that the ewes were well fed, for Mr. Oliver was no niggard

in that matter, but allowed the shepherd, without stint, all the cake and hay that was needed. Never before had the flock commenced to lamb so healthily!

John Sparkes, when he left Mr. Oliver, obtained employment as stableman for Mr. Matterface, the landlord at the Dodderdown Inn, and it's easy to guess that John, having been dismissed himself, would try his best to get the new shepherd sent off too. He had often endeavoured to beguile Mr. Poose to enter the inn during the daytime with the promise of a cheerful glass, but so far without success.

One night, about the middle of December, when the rains fell and the winds blew more violently than ever, Mr. Poose, who was with the sheep in the fold, noticed a curious behaviour in his dog, Jim, who appeared to wish to lead his master away to the Down where the flock, that had not so far lambed, had spent the day. Mr. Poose trusted his dog, and, leaving the shelter of the fold, with his lantern in his hand faced the driving rains. Following his dog's lead he came to a bush of furze where, to his astonishment, Mr. Poose found a man crouching.

"'Tis a damp bed thee've a-found," said the shepherd, holding his lantern to the face of the man who looked both poor and sad. "And I do fancy that me hut be better."

"You are a kind shepherd," replied the man, whose ragged overcoat was already soaked by the rain, "and I will be glad to accept of your shelter for this one night, that I know you will the more readily give me when I tell you that I, too, am a shepherd."

"Who have lost 'is flock," said Mr. Poose, slyly.

Mr. Poose was busy all the night with the sheep, and the stranger slept contentedly upon the sheepskin bed, but when the dawn came and Mr. Poose opened the hut door, he found him gone.

"To look for 'is sheep, maybe," said Mr. Poose.

On Christmas Eve the weather changed. A hailstorm drove the wind to the north; the stars shone clear and the frost fairies were abroad. Mr. Poose was glad of the change, for the cold though it had come so suddenly was not as harmful to the lambs as the heavy rains.

Mr. Poose was in happy spirits that night. He would not now need to be so vigilant and might take one or two hours' sleep in the hut. Before retiring there, however, he went, lantern in hand, through the sheep and discovered some that he had not expected to lamb so soon, were upon the point of labour.

Mr. Poose spent the night tending them. Now and again he would look at the shining stars.

"'Tis they sheep t'other shepherd 'ave a-lost," he said, winking up at them.

In the morning, seeing that all was well with the flock, Shepherd Poose had a mind to visit his cottage in the village and to wish his good wife, Joan, a happy Christmas. He carried an armful of sticks that he knew would be a welcome gift.

The church bells rang a merry tune as Mr. Poose walked in the lane cracking, in a happy manner, the new ice in the puddles.

Outside the Inn, from which a merry buzz of conversation came, Mr. Poose met John Sparkes, who called out in a jolly tone—

"Drink a glass to thik Holy babe, shepherd, that be born to-day, for thee baint no heathen to pass by tavern upon a Christmas morning."

Poose replied that he must return to the flock.

"But 'tis only woon moment that thee mid spend wi' we," laughed John Sparkes, "and 'twill bring good luck to they sheep to drink to thik babe."

"I be tired," said Poose, "and I don't suppose that woon cup of beer will hurt master; there baint no sheep a-groaning in's pains, so just to step in and take a drink can do no harm."

All was movement in the parlour when Shepherd Poose entered, after hanging up his crook upon the wall upon a nail beside the window, that had been used for generations by every shepherd who had entered the tavern.

A weary man likes company that bids him forget his toil, and the merry jest and cheerful glass drunk to the happy morning, together with the fact that outside soft feathery flakes of snow were falling that soon covered the ground with a white carpet, made time appear to stand still, so that Mr. Poose wotted not how the moments went.

From the Inn window Farmer Oliver's residence, Norman Grange, could be clearly seen, and John Sparkes noted with satisfaction that Mr. Oliver, clad in a heavy coat and gaiters, was walking out of his drive gates, and taking the way that went by the Inn and then on to the field where the flock was folded. John Sparkes turned to Poose.

"Another of the same, shepherd?" he said. "An' this time I'll treat 'ee to a drop of brandy in thee's beer."

Shepherd Poose sat near to the fire and gazed into it. The warm room,

the talk and the drink had dulled his senses; he forgot the sheep and, leaning forward still more, he closed his eyes.

John Sparkes stood by the window. Mr. Oliver had stopped in the lane to bid a happy Christmas to Mr. Hayball, the clergyman, who was going by. The farmer was now walking again; he would soon come by the Inn, notice the crook, go off to the field, and Shepherd Poose would certainly be dismissed that very day. But John Sparkes gave a sudden start of surprise, for a naked babe appeared walking in the snow. Sparkes rubbed his eyes and looked again. The babe smiled at him, and taking down the shepherd's crook from the wall, ran lightly in the direction of the sheepfold. . . .

Mr. Oliver was in good spirits when he reached the flock, for the snow was seasonable and he wished the shepherd a hearty Christmas greeting. The shepherd did not reply, neither did his master expect him to, for he was anxiously tending a ewe that was bringing a new lamb into the world.

Mr. Oliver noted with pleasure the gentle attention that the shepherd was giving, and leaving him for that moment went round to inspect the fold. Each of the penned sheep had been carefully tended, some that had been sick were now well and only one lamb lay beside its mother apparently dead. Mr. Oliver raised it. It fell back again, as though dead.

He called to the shepherd, who came and touched the lamb, that breathed again, struggled to its feet, found the ewe's udder, and drank thirstily.

"You are wonderful," said Mr. Oliver, "for I thought the lamb was dead."

Mr. Oliver left the fold; he walked by the Inn and entered his own gates again. . . .

When Shepherd Poose awoke he hurried to the flock. The Shepherd whom he had sheltered was there, who handed him his crook.

"Then sheep baint found yet?" Poose asked him.

"No, but I am still seeking them," replied the shepherd, and left the fold.

T. F. Powys.

A CHRISTMAS GIFT

IT IS A HARMLESS WISH TO LIKE A LITTLE NOTICE TO BE TAKEN OF ONE'S name, and a number of people, besides Mr. Balliboy, the Dodder carrier, like attention to be paid to their names when they are written down. Children will write their names upon a fair stretch of yellow sand, young men will carve their names upon an old oak in the forest, and even the most simple peasant will like to see his name printed in a newspaper.

For most of his life Mr. Balliboy was satisfied with having his name written upon the side of his van, and he was always pleased and interested when anyone paused in the street to read his name.

But Mr. Balliboy's pride in his name made him do more than one foolish thing.

Once he cut "Mr. Balliboy, Carrier," with his market knife upon one of the doors of Mr. Told's old barn, and again upon the right-hand post of the village pound. But, on his going to see how the names looked the next Sunday, —and perhaps hoping that a stranger might be found regarding them,—he discovered, to his sorrow, that the rude village boys had changed the first letters of his name into an unpleasant and ill-sounding word.

Mr. Balliboy was a lonely man, and a bachelor—for no young woman would ever look at his name twice and none had ever wished to have his name written beside hers in a church register.

One Christmas Mr. Balliboy journeyed, as was his wont, to Weyminster. His van was full of country women, each one of whom thought herself to be of the highest quality, for each had put on the finest airs with her market clothes and, so dressed, could talk in a superior manner.

Mr. Balliboy had certainly one reason for happiness—other than the ordinary joyfulness of the merry season—which was that his rival, John Hawkins, had passed by with his van empty of customers,—yet Mr. Balliboy was sad. His sadness came, strangely enough, only because he wished, for the first time in his life, to give a Christmas present.

It might have been only to give himself pleasure that he wished to do this.— For whatever the present was that he should buy, he determined that a label should be tied on it, with his name written clearly upon it—"From Mr. Balliboy."

What the present would be, and to whom it should be given, Mr. Balliboy

did not know. He decided to buy something that he fancied, and then allow destiny to decide to whom the gift should go.

When Mr. Balliboy reached the town he walked about the streets in order to see what could be bought for money. Many a shop window did he look into and many a time did he stand and scratch his head, wondering what he should buy.

There was one oddity that he fancied in a toy-shop,—a demon holding a fork in his hand, upon which he was raising a naked young woman. Mr. Balliboy thought the demon might do, but over the young woman he shook his head.

Mr. Balliboy moved to another window. Here at once, he saw what pleased him,—a little cross, made of cardboard and covered with tinsel, that shone and glistened before Mr. Balliboy's admiring eyes.

Mr. Balliboy purchased the cross for a shilling and attached a label to it, with his name written large. . . .

Sometimes a change comes over a scene, now so happy and gay but in one moment altered into a frown. As soon as Mr. Balliboy had buttoned the cross into his pocket the streets of Weyminster showed this changed look. The shoppers' merriment and joyful surprise at what they saw in the windows gave place to a sad and tired look. The great church that so many hurried by in order to reach their favourite tavern, appeared more dark and sombre than a winter's day should ever have made it.

Even the warm drinks served out by black-haired Mabel at the "Rod and Lion" could not make the drinkers forget that care and trouble could cut a Christmas cake and sing a Christmas carol as well as they.

The general gloom of the town touched Mr. Balliboy, and had he not had the present hid in his coat, he might have entered an Inn, in order to drown the troubled feelings that moved about him, in a deep mug.

But, having bought the Christmas present, he had now the amusement of seeking the right person to give it to. And so, instead of walking along the street with downcast eyes, he walked along smiling.

While he was yet some way off his van, he could see that a figure was standing beside it, who seemed to be reading his name. And, whoever this was, Mr. Balliboy determined as he walked, that it should be the one to receive his Christmas gift.

As he drew nearer he saw that the figure was that of a young woman—

wrapped in a thin cloak—who showed by her wan look and by her shape that she expected soon to be a mother.

At a little distance from his van Mr. Balliboy waited, pretending to admire a row of bottles in a wine-merchant's shop-window, but, at the same time, keeping an eye upon the woman.

"Was she a thief,—was she come there to steal?" A passing policeman, with a fine military strut, evidently thought so.

"Don't stand about here," he shouted. "Go along home with you!"

The policeman seized her roughly.

"I am doing no harm," the woman said, looking at the name again, "I am only waiting for Mr. Balliboy."

"Go along, you lying drab," grumbled the policeman.

He would have pushed her along, only Mr. Balliboy, who had heard his name mentioned, came nearer.

"Baint 'ee poor Mary," he asked, "who was to have married the carpenter at Shelton?"

The policeman winked twice at Mr. Balliboy, smiled and walked on.

"What was it," asked Mr. Balliboy, kindly, as soon as the policeman was out of hearing, "that made 'ee wish to study and remember the name of a poor carrier?"

"I wished to ask you," said the young woman, "whether you would take me as far as the 'Norbury Arms.' Here is my fare," and she handed Mr. Balliboy a shilling—the price of the cross.

Mr. Balliboy put the shilling into his pocket.

"Get up into van," he said, "and 'tis to be hoped they t'others won't mind 'ee."

That day the most respectable of the people of the village had come to town in Mr. Balliboy's van. There was even rich Mrs. Told, clad in warm furs, whose own motor-car had met with an accident the day before. There were others too, as comfortably off,—Mrs. Potten and Mrs. Biggs—and none of these, or even his lesser customers, did Mr. Balliboy wish to offend. He looked anxiously up the street and then into the van.

The young woman's clothes were rags, her toes peeped from her shoes, and she sighed woefully.

Mr. Balliboy gave her a rug to cover her. "Keep tight hold of 'en," he said, "for t'other women be grabbers."

The change in the town from joy to trouble had caused the women who had journeyed with Mr. Balliboy that day to arrive at the van a little late, and in no very good tempers. And, when they did come, they were not best pleased to see a poor woman—worse clothed than a tramp—sitting in the best seat in the van, with her knees covered by Mr. Balliboy's rug.

"'Tis only Mary," said Mr. Balliboy, hoping to put them at their ease. "'Tis only thik poor toad."

"Mary, is it?" cried Mrs. Biggs angrily, "who did deceive Joseph with her wickedness. What lady would ride with her? Turn her out at once, Mr. Balliboy, —the horrid wretch."

"Out with her!" cried Mrs. Told. "Just look at her," and she whispered unpleasant words to Mrs. Potten.

Mr. Balliboy hesitated. He hardly knew what to do. He had more than once borrowed a little straw from Mrs. Told's stackyard and now he did not want to offend her.

He had a mind to order Mary out, only—putting his hand under his coat to look at his watch—he felt the Christmas present that he had purchased—the cardboard cross.

"Thee needn't sit beside her," he said coaxingly to Mrs. Told, "though she's skin be as white and clean as any lamb's."

"We won't have no lousy breeding beggar with we," shouted Mrs. Biggs, who had taken a little too much to drink at the tavern.

"Let she alone," said Mr. Balliboy, scratching his head and wondering what he had better do.

"Thrust her out," cried Mrs. Potten, and, climbing into the van, she spat at the woman.

"Out with her," screamed Mrs. Told. "Away with her, away with her!" cried all the women.

Now, had it not been that Mr. Balliboy had taken Mary's shilling and so made her free of his van, with the right to be carried as far as the "Norbury Arms," he might have performed the commands of the drunken woman and thrown Mary into the street. But, as he had taken her shilling, Mr. Balliboy bethought him of what was his own.

The woman had read his name; he had taken her fare.

"Let she alone," said Mr. Balliboy gruffly to Mrs. Biggs, who had laid hands upon the woman.

"We'll go to John Hawkins; he'll take us home," said Mrs. Told angrily.

Mr. Balliboy winced. He knew how glad his rival would be to welcome all his company.

"Why, what evil has she done?" Mr. Balliboy asked in a milder tone.

With one accord the women shouted out Mary's sorrow.

"Away with her, away with her!" they called.

Mr. Balliboy put his hand into his coat, but it was not his watch that he felt for this time,—it was his Christmas gift.

"Away with your own selves," he said stoutly. "Thik maiden be going wi' I, for 'tis me own van."

Mr. Balliboy took his seat angrily and the women left him. He knew that what had happened that afternoon was likely to have a lasting effect upon his future. Everyone in the village would side with the women with whom he had quarrelled, and the story of his kindness to Mary would not lose in the telling.

But, before very long, an accident happened that troubled Mr. Balliboy even more than the loss of his customers.—In the middle of a long and lonely road his van broke down.

Mr. Balliboy tried to start the car, but with no success. Other carriers passed him by, amongst whom was John Hawkins, and many were the taunts and unseemly jests shouted at him by the Christmas revellers who sat therein.—But soon all was silence, and the road utterly deserted, for the time was near midnight.

For some while Mr. Balliboy busied himself with the aid of the car lamps, trying to start the engine. But, all at once and without any warning, the lamps went out.

Mr. Balliboy shivered. The weather was changed, a sharp frost had set in and the stars shone brightly. Someone groaned. Mary's pains had come upon her.

"I be going," said Mr. Balliboy," to get some help for 'ee."

Mr. Balliboy had noticed a little cottage across the moor, with a light in the window. He hurried there, but before he reached the cottage the light had vanished, and, knock as he would at the door, no one replied.

"What be I to do?" cried Mr. Balliboy anxiously, and looked up at the sky.—A large and brightly-shining star appeared exactly above his van.

Mr. Balliboy looked at his van and rubbed his eyes. The van was lit up and beams of strange light seemed to emanate from it.

"'Taint on fire, I do hope," said Mr. Balliboy. He began to run and came quickly to the car.

Mary was now resting comfortably, while two shining creatures with white wings leaned over her. Upon her lap was her new-born babe, smiling happily.

Mr. Balliboy fumbled in his coat for his Christmas gift. He stepped into the van and held out the cross to the babe.

Mary looked proudly at her infant, and the babe, delighted with the shining toy, took hold of the cross.

The angels wept.

T. F. Powys.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Still falls the snow. White-thatched are all the groves:
Lost field, sunk roadway, and the buried heather
Lie in unbroken whiteness all together.

This is not snow of any worldly weather,
For now the Queen of Loves
Drops to our earth feather on crystal feather
Plucked from her team of doves.

Cold, in the moonlight cold, the hoar-frost shines
On forests lost in snow, a desolation
Like seas of foam in frozen fluctuation.

Those moon-lit fires of frosty scintillation
On boughs of frozen pines
Are jewels from the days before Creation
Dug from no mortal mines.

Row upon glassy row, from cornice white
Of boughs and thatches, hang the slim and even
Long icicles, like daggers, frost-engraven.

Seven on the eaves and on the pine-bough seven,
These are the swords shall smite
The heart of Mary Mother, Queen of Heaven;
For on this winter's night

The hidden Flower of Love wakes from its dreaming,
Breaks the green sheath, uncurls each petal folded;
And silently as dew on long leaves gleaming
The world is shattered and a new world moulded
In Love's own likeness, ere world-weary men
Have taken breath and breathed it out again.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG.

HOLY THORN

At the dead turning of the year
This hawthorn tree stands winter-bare,
And dazed with storm, and numb with rime,
Forgets the processes of time.

What is it to this rocky grief,
That the tides broke in bud and leaf
On the old shores of vanished May?

What is it to this chill dismay
That the unsighted May shall be
Warm and translucent as the sea,
With naiad flowers drifting upon
Its green, sun-calméd ocean?

These things, like fairy-stories, are
Legendary, faint and far;
They have no meaning for a tree
So islanded in misery.

But there are set, even for this,
To-night, the rescuing sails of peace. . . .

For now snow softly falls, and weaves
A silver dream of summer eves,
And the tree stretches twig and bough,
Thinking the glimmering weight of snow
Honey-hearted as blossom was
That once leaned over the tall, May grass.
The sap remembers how, between
Night and morning, a wind serene
Brushed the ghost petals, and set moving
Love, and the fragrances of loving:
And the tree muses how night's blue
Trembled to green, and how strange dew,
Repeating heaven star for star,
Made the field unfamiliar.

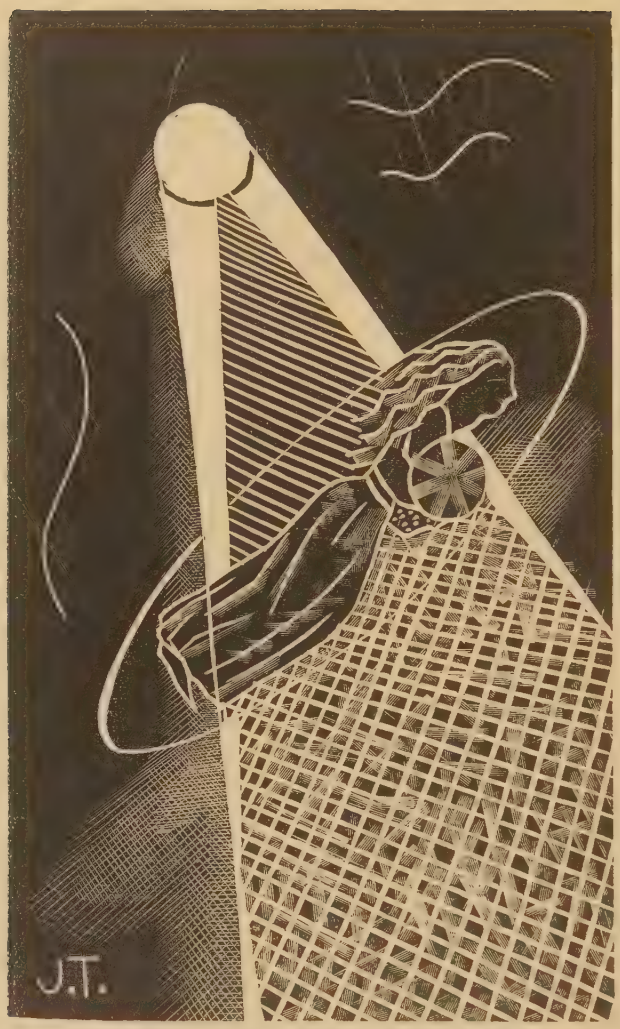
And now, like that lost nightingale
Who sang till the moon burned cold and pale
On the grave pyre of dawn, the air
Is tuned to an invisible, rare
Music; and luminous-feathered song
Dives and wheels and flits among
The listening branches, till the tree,
Lit with antiphonal ecstasy,
Jets from the sealed and silent ground
In crystal fountains, whose clear sound
Sings upward to the singing sky
A rapt and fiery symphony.

And while the tree resolves all pain
In the pure silver of that strain,
Behold, in darkness suddenly
Another and a holier tree
Invests with candid, radiant light
The long, dusk-haunted groves of night;
Those blossoms gleam more milky-fair
Than Eve's blanched flowers in Eden were;
Those boughs spread out like arms to take
A world to shelter, for love's sake,
And at its heart those green leaves fold
A child, whose head is ringed with gold.
Is he a king? his courtiers then
Are falcon and throstle, dove and wren;
A general? his armies are
Butterflies winging the wide air;
A god? his only priestess is
Maid Mary kneeling in the grass. . . .
Now through her tears the petals fall
Red and white and beautiful,
Until she prays in snow, and stark
A thorn-crowned tree upbraids the dark
A moment, and the vision
Melts in the morning, and is gone.

The bells ring out for Christmas day
With "Gloria" and "Gloria,"
And on the eastern horizon
Flowers a rose-enfolding sun,
Fulfilling life.

The hawthorn tree,
Waking from what epiphany,
Ponders what winter, what high spring
Met in that heavenly blossoming.

VIOLA GERARD GARVIN.



'Within the circle a woman dressed in gold.'

THE MIRACLE OF THE VINEYARD

IT HAPPENED IN THE DAYS OF THE EMPEROR TIBERIUS THAT A CERTAIN Greek merchant named Dioclidas was travelling by sea from Alexandria to Rome. The weather being fair, he spent the greater part of his days and nights upon the deck, watching the dolphins leap and play, or talking, with the captain of the vessel, of the countries they had visited and the ways of the people in those parts and other matters that concern travellers and seamen.

One night as the ship was nearing the coast of Sicily, a great calm fell. The waters became glassy as a marble floor, and the moon's reflection in them was unbroken as a stretched silken carpet. The captain, when he had seen that all was safe against the wind's return, came and stood beside Dioclidas upon the deck, and for a while looked silently at the glittering waves and the moon's clear pathway and the faint line of land that lay to the north of the vessel.

"I do not like this calm," he said. And Dioclidas asked him: "Do you fear the rocks?" And the captain answered: "No, not greatly. I fear the waters we are in and the things that happen here when the wind drops. It was in this place or hereabouts that Thamus heard the voice call to him and bid him tell all men that the god Pan was dead." At this Dioclidas gave a start, and gazing into the captain's face, begged him to explain his words more fully. "For this is strange news to me," he said, "and touches me closely." And the captain said: "It is curious you should not have heard the tale. I thought it was known in every corner of the Empire." And Dioclidas said: "I have spent these forty years in Persia and in Palestine. Maybe that is the reason I have not heard it." So the captain told him the story that is common knowledge now to the whole world. Yet there is no harm in repeating it.

"I was with Thamus on that journey," he said, "and so can speak of the event as well as any and better than most. I was Thamus' mate, and he and I and the rest of the crew and many of the passengers were on deck at that hour, eating and drinking and making merry. The calm had come upon us even as it came to-night. But having no cause for fear, we lay happily enough and poured to the gods within us our ten or twenty libations to every one we offered to Olympus. And suddenly, during a spell of silence, we heard a voice call out: 'Thamus, are you there?' Our captain, somewhat astonished, replied that he was there indeed. Whereupon the voice said: 'You are to announce to all men that Pan, the great Pan, is dead;'—and the tone of the voice was so solemn,

so mysterious and withal so utterly despairing that our skins crept with cold and the hair of our bodies stood up. Moreover, after the words were spoken, there came a doleful noise of crying and sobbing, as bitter as if the whole world wept. Presently, the wind being risen again, we sailed to the shore that was nearest to the ship. But it seems no one knew the name Thamus, no one had called. So we went on to Rome, and Thamus told the story to the Emperor. It was the wonder of that year, for although learned folk were sent to question us and generally to investigate the matter, no conclusion could be found, save that, in fact, the son of Mercury and the nymph Penelope, the god of shepherds and of flocks, was dead."

The captain fell silent, staring moodily at the waves. And Dioclidas was silent also. But his look was not the same as his companion's. He had the expression of a man who wonders, within himself, whether he will speak or will not speak, and whether, speaking, he will be believed. At last he said—and his tone was strained and anxious—"Pan is dead yet he is not dead." And now it was the captain's turn to start and stare and gape in profound astonishment. "Not dead?" he said. "How do you know?" And Dioclidas, scarcely heeding him, repeated: "He is dead and yet not dead. I know your tale is true, because I saw Pan die. And I know he lives—either in himself or in some form that is like his—because I saw that form." And the captain, more than ever amazed, urged him to relate his story, that such a singular affair should not remain hidden from the minds of men. And Dioclidas did so.

"I have not told this tale before," he said, "because it is so odd that I feared no man would believe it. I myself have often wondered if it were true and if I were not bewitched.—But you shall judge.

"It chanced, many years ago, that I was journeying in Palestine, and having visited Damascus and Jerusalem, came to a town called Engaddi. Here, the hour being late, I resolved to rest and sleep at the hostelry which is in that place. I recall the night particularly. It was the night of the winter solstice in the year that Herod, the king of the Jews, made a count of the people. On that night, as I learnt later, a certain prophet was born in Bethlehem, who was said to be the promised Messiah of the Jews. But that is by the way. It will help your memory better if I remind you that there were signs and prodigies that night in Rome itself—as for example, a rock gushed forth oil instead of water, and the temple of Peace that had the statue of Romulus in it fell down, and, on the day before, the Sybil whom the Emperor consulted, beheld a circle set about

the sun and within the circle a woman dressed in gold, holding a golden infant. Although I had not heard your story of the captain Thamus, I heard of these signs, for it is ever the greatest marvel that travels farthest.

"But as you will understand, I did not know of them in Engaddi. Then I knew only that the night was unusually warm and that there was an uncommon brightness in the sky and that I myself was restless and could not sleep. So presently I rose from my bed in the hostelry and went to the hills that are above the town and sat myself down to enjoy the quiet and breathe the fresher air.

"And as I sat there I saw an exceeding strange sight. Beneath the spot that I had chosen lay a large vineyard. It was as bare and desolate at that hour as a vineyard can be in the dead of winter. But as I looked at it, behold it became green and blossoming! In truth it was the strangest, fairest thing my eyes have ever seen. By little and little the leaves sprouted, the tiny flowers formed, the fruit appeared and turned from green to yellow and from yellow to gold. It seemed, too, that the brightness that was in the sky had grown stronger, for now I could see the plants and the leaves and the smallest tendrils clearly. Yet I was so amazed I could not trust my eyes. After a spell of foolish staring, I rose and ran down the hill, and plucking one of the grapes, put it in my mouth. It was a grape indeed and tasted most deliciously. Of such, I have no doubt, is the nectar made that the gods drink in Olympus.

"This was but the first of the prodigious things I saw that night. While I stood there, savouring the fruit, I heard a noise like to the noise of a reed played haltingly by an indifferent or wearied player. It came from the hill-side, and when I turned in its direction, I saw a figure walking towards the vineyard, the sight of which, for very terror, flung me grovelling down upon my belly. For the figure from the waist upward was a man's and from the waist downwards was a goat's. It had a beard and a great thick-lipped mouth; on its head were horns; in its hands it carried the reeds that the god Pan cut from the stream in which his Syrinx drowned herself. In a word, the figure was our holy Pan himself. He went slowly down the hill, and ever and anon he raised his flute to his lips and drew from it the thin, cracked notes that I had heard. And after each note he flung out his hand very unhappily and raised his eyes to heaven and groaned.

"I was so held by the wondrous vision, by its odd, broken music and its manifest grief, that my fears were lost. I lay at a corner of the vineyard, and screening myself with its leaves, peeped and peeped at the shepherd god. And

I thought that he was very old and weary-looking. The hair upon his chest was like the moss that grows on ancient stones; his beard was like dry, withered straw; his hands were thin, the muscles on them hard and stiff as dead ivy on an oak-trunk. His gait, too, was tottering, and his eyes rheumy and dim. But when he reached the vineyard he revived a little. He gave a feeble jump, and coming to the grapes, began to clutch at them with both his hands and to push them into his mouth as one might do who had not eaten or drunk for moons together. And when he had gorged his full, he lay back among the vines and cocked one leg over the other and fell to playing on his pipe more in the manner, now, of a true god than of a tired, sick old man.

"And this time the sounds he made were very sweet. He played, and I, listening, beheld in fancy the woods of Arcady and Syrinx fleeing and pretty Pitys and all the other merry, naughty nymphs. Yet it seems that somewhere in the world there is music sweeter than Pan's. For presently the god paused, and in the silence I caught another sound. And I saw Pan twitch his huge ear and lift his head and listen also. And as he listened to that music—which came I could not say from whence, but was more beautiful, more tender, more joyous, I vow, than any human ear has ever heard—the old god clutched again at the bunches of grapes, and gave another groan, and turned his face to the ground and died.

"So he lay, the fruit still crushed and dripping in his hands. And then the lovely music ceased, and I heard in its stead a prolonged and terrible cry, as of a thousand wolves howling. And I turned once more towards the hill and saw a mighty procession of beasts come down its slopes, going, as Pan had gone, into the vineyard. Sheep there were, and wolves and goats and oxen and leopards, and unknown creatures like dragons and unicorns and griffins—more than eye could count or mind remember. And all the beasts came in solemn concourse to the place where Pan lay, and all hung their heads and all moaned piteously. And after they had bent their fore-legs and rested their noses on the ground for a short space, they lifted his body up and carried it out of the vineyard and away over the hill. And I saw them no more.

"Yet I remained beside the vineyard. The grapes were fresh and golden; and I continued to stare at them in wonder and in awe, for although a thousand beasts had walked amidst their branches, they were untouched and blooming as before. And while I lay there I heard another curious sound, proceeding from the further side of the vineyard, the very spot where the beasts had borne

Pan's body out. So, being now passed far beyond fear, I crept a little way nearer to the sound and peeped again through the stems. And thus I beheld the last and maybe the strangest spectacle of that strange night. Upon the ground crouched a figure which I felt sure was Pan—a Pan reborn as Attis is reborn and Osiris and the Persian Tammuz; nothing was too odd at that hour for my bewildered fancy. This figure also had a great mouth and ears; it had a tail and hoofs and horns. But as I looked, I thought the god seemed in a manner changed; his wide lips were neither merry nor sad, neither saucy nor even lecherous; they were only fierce and greedy; his eyes, which were fixed intently on the vineyard, had a look of hatred and defiance and rage and fear. For a while he crouched, making a mumbling, growling noise, which was the noise that I had heard; then he leaped suddenly up, and with a last horrid growl, ran off in the direction of the wilderness. And when I examined the ground where he had been, I found it a little blackened, and there was a peculiar smell about it, as of sulphur."

Dioclidas paused. The night was altogether quiet, save for a soft rippling beneath the ship's bows, and the tap, from time to time, of a loosened rope against the mast.

"I loved Pan," said Dioclidas, "yet that queer, new form of his filled me with horror. It seemed to itch with evil as a dog with fleas; it leaped away as though it had no thought but to shake that evil out upon the world until all men itched as furiously." Dioclidas paused again. "What," he asked of the captain, "can have made Pan so ugly and so fierce? What was there in the marvel of the vineyard that he should gaze upon it, at the last, with such terror and such hatred?"

"How should I know?" said the captain.

HELEN BEAUCLERK.

A PERSIAN LEGEND

Legend says, that the Kings
Set out from Shiraz
On laden journey
With redolent things:
Frankincense, myrrh,
Led to the manger
Where *He* lay with *Her*,
Christ with Mary,
Strangely conceived;
Myrrh and frankincense
Sleepy received.
But I must wonder,
I, (having been
To Shiraz where the desert
Melts into green,
Where the Judas tree
And the cypress grove
Made Saadi and Hafiz
Sing of love,)
How Baldassare
And Melchior
And Gaspar came
To Bethlehem, for
The way must have been
Too harsh for them
From soft Shiraz
To Bethlehem?
Over the mountains,
Down to the plain,
Even to greet
Messiah's reign;
Even to follow
A Western star,

The way must have been
Too harsh, too far.
All Arabia
Stretched between.

But those were days
For faith and youth,
When Kings could journey
In search of truth;
And deserts were
But a corridor
For Baldassare
And Melchior.
Shiraz the soft
Appeared to them
Less than the desert
To Bethlehem.
The way appeared
Less harsh, less far
Than the urgency
Of the Western star,
Else how should the Kings
Of Shiraz set out
Across the desert
Clear of doubt?

V. Sackville-West.

ECLOGUE

"Neighbour, let us to our church go
This Christmas Eve,
To see the shepherds and kings kneel low
And Jesus in Mary's sleeve
And Joseph standing by well-pleased."

"Babe nor mother should we find
This winter's night.
Our church now belongs to a king whose mind
Is grown too wise to delight
In toys and images like these."

"Neighbour, let us to the tavern go
This Christmas Eve,
And kiss Nan under the mistletoe,
And give the mummers good leave
To quench their roaring thirst in our bowl."

"Mirth nor mummers should we find
This winter's night;
For Oliver's men are strict to bind
In stocked or pilloried plight
Players of wanton games like these."

"Neighbour, let us to our neighbours go
This Christmas Eve,
And raise those tunes of long-ago,
And a drink or a shilling receive
In thanks for the good news we have told."

"Drink nor shilling should we find
This winter's night;
For schoolmistress teaches how unrefined
Must sound to all ears polite
Such old-time country staves as these."

"Neighbour, let us to the pictures go
This Christmas Eve,
And see a lady her garters show,
And a cunning thief deceive,
And the townsfolk sitting there well-pleased."

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER.

PLEDGES ON THE SNOW

When the air is chill,
And all is still, so still,
And Hampstead Ponds are silver sheets and white is Hampstead Hill,
With a child I know
Over the hill I'll go,
Into the new-created world to find untrodden snow.
We'll leave to sliding boys
The Whitestone water's joys,
We'll leave to sledding crowds the slopes, and past the realm of noise
Somewhere out of range
We'll find a place as strange
As the first snowdrifts of the world before there came a change.

By crested tree and hedge
We two will trace the edge
Of many a sign our forerunners have left there for a pledge,
The print of foot and claw
That, travelling whitened shaw
And field, were made upon the way by them we never saw.

And they who left them, where
Are they? We cannot share
Ourselves with them, we gaze ahead upon the shapeless air,
Only underfoot
Feather and pad and boot
Walk softly, softly still the level plain and knotty root.

Bird we shall never see,
Child who will never be,
Dog that will never run and leap for joy of her and me,
We whom you never knew
Go to discover too
Some white and virgin solitude, and leave our pledge for you.

ELEANOR FARJEON.

A CHRISTMAS ANAGRAM

A ll attend to what I say :

C hrist, the Lord, was born to-day,
H is little body lapped in hay.
R ound him breathing oxen lay
I n the warm stall.
S hepherds first the tidings told,
T hen the kings in fur and gold
M ade their way across the wold,
A ngels carolled in the cold,
S now covered all.

S o sang they
O n Christmas day,
N ow as then
G ood-will to men.

FRANCES CORNFORD.

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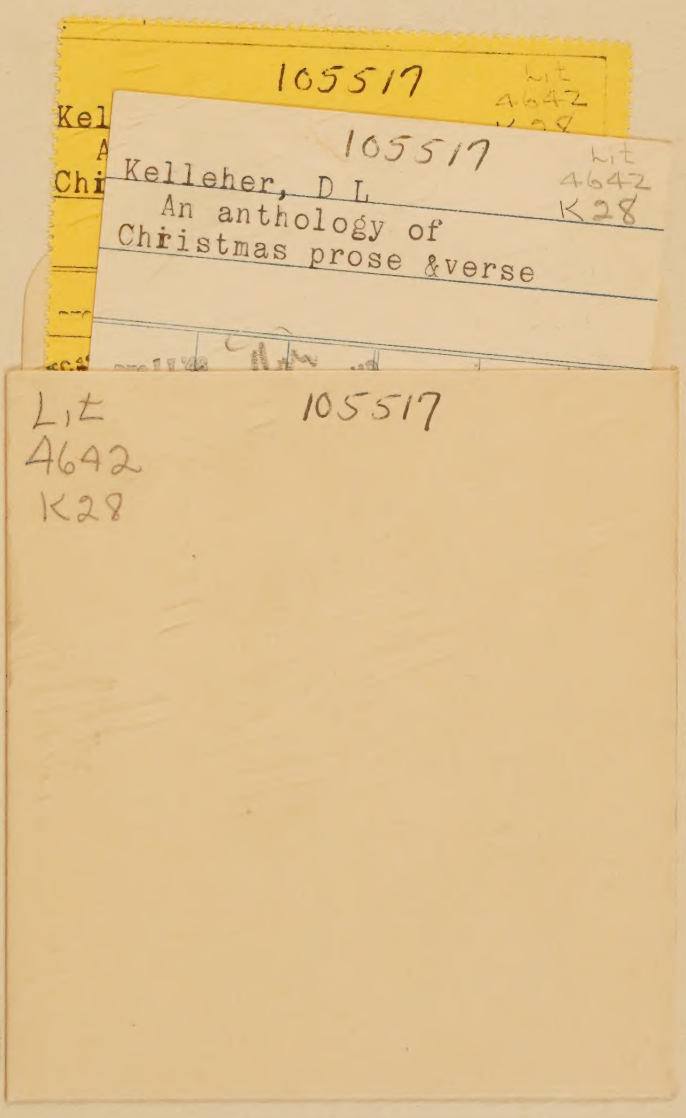
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